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Illustrated Sterling Edition

HISTORICAL DRAMAS

BY

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

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WILHELM TELL.

ACT I.

Scene I.

A high, rocky shore of the lake of Lucerne opposite Schwytz. The lake makes a bend into the land; a hut stands at a short distance from the shore; the fisher boy is rowing about in his boat. Beyond the lake are seen the green meadows, the hamlets, and farms of Schwytz, lying in the clear sunshine. On the left are observed the peaks of the Hacken, surrounded with clouds; to the right, and in the remote distance, appear the Glaciers. The Ranz des Vaches, and the tinkling of cattle-bells, continue for some time after the rising of the curtain.

FISHER BOY (*sings in his boat*).

Melody of the Ranz des Vaches.

The clear, smiling lake wooed to bathe in its deep,
A boy on its green shore had laid him to sleep;
Then heard he a melody
Flowing and soft,
And sweet, as when angels
Are singing aloft.
And as thrilling with pleasure he wakes from his rest,
The waters are murmuring over his breast;
And a voice from the deep cries,
"With me thou must go,
I charm the young shepherd,
I lure him below."

HERDSMAN (*on the mountains*).

Air.— Variation of the Ranz des Vaches.

Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.

We go to the hills, but you'll see us again,
When the cuckoo is calling, and wood-notes are gay,
When flowerets are blooming in dingle and plain,
And the brooks sparkle up in the sunshine of May.
Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.

CHAMOIS HUNTER (*appearing on the top of a cliff*).

Second Variation of the Ranz des Vaches.

On the heights peals the thunder, and trembles the bridge,
The huntsman bounds on by the dizzying ridge,
Undaunted he hies him
O'er ice-covered wild,
Where leaf never budded,
Nor spring ever smiled;
And beneath him an ocean of mist, where his eye
No longer the dwellings of man can espy;
Through the parting clouds only
The earth can be seen,
Far down 'neath the vapor
The meadows of green.

[*A change comes over the landscape. A rumbling, cracking noise is heard among the mountains. Shadows of clouds sweep across the scene.*

[RUODI, *the fisherman, comes out of his cottage.* WERNI, *the huntsman, descends from the rocks.* KUONI, *the shepherd, enters, with a milk-pail on his shoulders, followed by* SEPPI, *his assistant.*

RUODI. Bestir thee, Jenni, haul the boat on shore.
The grizzly Vale-king * comes, the glaciers moan,
The lofty Mytenstein† draws on his hood,
And from the Stormcleft chilly blows the wind;
The storm will burst before we are prepared.

* The German is *Thalvogt*, Ruler of the Valley — the name given figuratively to a dense gray mist which the south wind sweeps into the valleys from the mountain tops. It is well known as the precursor of stormy weather.

† A steep rock standing on the north of Rütli, and nearly opposite to Brumen.

KUONI. 'Twill rain ere long; my sheep browse eagerly,
And Watcher there is scraping up the earth.
WERNI. The fish are leaping, and the water-hen
Dives up and down. A storm is coming on.
KUONI (*to his boy*).
Look, Seppi, if the cattle are not straying.
SEPPI. There goes brown Liesel, I can hear her bells.
KUONI. Then all are safe; she ever ranges farthest.
RUODI. You've a fine yoke of bells there, master herdsman.
WERNI. And likely cattle, too. Are they your own?
KUONI. I'm not so rich. They are the noble lord's
Of Attinghaus, and trusted to my care.
RUODI. How gracefully yon heifer bears her ribbon!
KUONI. Ay, well she knows she's leader of the herd,
And, take it from her, she'd refuse to feed.
RUODI. You're joking now. A beast devoid of reason.
WERNI. That's easy said. But beasts have reason too —
And that we know, we men that hunt the chamois.
They never turn to feed — sagacious creatures!
Till they have placed a sentinel ahead,
Who pricks his ears whenever we approach,
And gives alarm with clear and piercing pipe.
RUODI (*to the shepherd*).
Are you for home?
KUONI. The Alp is grazed quite bare.
WERNI. A safe return, my friend!
KUONI. The same to you?
Men come not always back from tracks like yours.
RUODI. But who comes here, running at topmost speed?
WERNI. I know the man; 'tis Baumgart of Alzellen.
CONRAD BAUMGARTEN (*rushing in breathless*).
For God's sake, ferryman, your boat!
RUODI. How now?
Why all this haste?
BAUM. Cast off! My life's at stake!
Set me across!
KUONI. Why, what's the matter, friend?
WERNI. Who are pursuing you? First tell us that.

BAUM. (*to the fisherman*).
Quick, quick, even now they're close upon my heels!
The viceroy's horsemen are in hot pursuit!
I'm a lost man should they lay hands upon me.
RUODI. Why are the troopers in pursuit of you?
BAUM. First save my life and then I'll tell you all.
WERNI. There's blood upon your garments — how is this?
BAUM. The imperial seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg.
KUONI. How! What! The Wolfshot?* Is it he pursues you?
BAUM. He'll ne'er hunt man again; I've settled him.
ALL (*starting back*).
Now, God forgive you, what is this you've done!
BAUM. What every free man in my place had done.
I have but used mine own good household right
'Gainst him that would have wronged my wife — my honor.
KUONI. And has he wronged you in your honor, then?
BAUM. That he did not fulfil his foul desire
Is due to God and to my trusty axe.
WERNI. You've cleft his skull, then, have you, with your axe?
KUONI. Oh, tell us all! You've time enough, before
The boat can be unfastened from its moorings.
BAUM. When I was in the forest, felling timber,
My wife came running out in mortal fear
"The seneschal," she said, "was in my house,
Had ordered her to get a bath prepared,
And thereupon had taken unseemly freedoms,
From which she rid herself and flew to me."
Armed as I was I sought him, and my axe
Has given his bath a bloody benediction.
WERNI. And you did well; no man can blame the deed.
KUONI. The tyrant! Now he has his just reward!
We men of Unterwald have owed it long.

* In German, *Wolfenschiessen*—a young man of noble family, and a native of Unterwalden, who attached himself to the house of Austria and was appointed *Burgvogt*, or seneschal, of the castle of Rossberg. He was killed by Baumgarten in the manner and for the cause mentioned in the text.

BAUM. The deed got wind, and now they're in pursuit.
Heavens! whilst we speak, the time is flying fast.
[*It begins to thunder.*
KUONI. Quick, ferrymen, and set the good man over.
RUODI. Impossible! a storm is close at hand,
Wait till it pass! You must.
BAUM. Almighty heavens!
I cannot wait; the least delay is death.
KUONI (*to the fisherman*).
Push out. God with you! We should help our neighbors;
The like misfortune may betide us all.
[*Thunder and the roaring of the wind.*
RUODI. The south wind's up!* See how the lake is rising!
I cannot steer against both storm and wave.
BAUM. (*clasping him by the knees*).
God so help you, as now you pity me!
WERNI. His life's at stake. Have pity on him, man!
KUONI. He is a father: has a wife and children.
[*Repeated peals of thunder.*
RUODI. What! and have I not, then, a life to lose,
A wife and child at home as well as he?
See, how the breakers foam, and toss, and whirl,
And the lake eddies up from all its depths!
Right gladly would I save the worthy man,
But 'tis impossible, as you must see.
BAUM. (*still kneeling*).
Then must I fall into the tyrant's hands,
And with the port of safety close in sight!
Yonder it lies! My eyes can measure it,
My very voice can echo to its shores.
There is the boat to carry me across,
Yet must I lie here helpless and forlorn.
KUONI. Look! who comes here?

* Literally, the *Föhn* is loose! "When," says Müller, in his History of Switzerland, "the wind called the Föhn is high the navigation of the lake becomes extremely dangerous. Such is its vehemence that the laws of the country require that the fires shall be extinguished in the houses while it lasts, and the night watches are doubled. The inhabitants lay heavy stones upon the roofs of their houses to prevent their being blown away."

RUODI. 'Tis Tell, brave Tell, of Bürglen.*
[*Enter* TELL, *with a crossbow.*
TELL. Who is the man that here implores for aid?
KUONI. He is from Alzellen, and to guard his honor
From touch of foulest shame, has slain the Wolf-shot!
The imperial seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg.
The viceroy's troopers are upon his heels;
He begs the boatman here to take him over,
But he, in terror of the storm, refuses.
RUODI. Well, there is Tell can steer as well as I.
He'll be my judge, if it be possible.
[*Violent peals of thunder — the lake becomes more tempestuous.*
Am I to plunge into the jaws of hell?
I should be mad to dare the desperate act.
TELL. The brave man thinks upon himself the last.
Put trust in God, and help him in his need!
RUODI. Safe in the port, 'tis easy to advise.
There is the boat, and there the lake! Try you!
TELL. The lake may pity, but the viceroy will not.
Come, venture, man!
SHEPHERD *and* HUNTSMAN.
Oh, save him! save him! save him!
RUODI. Though 'twere my brother, or my darling child,
I would not go. It is St. Simon's day,
The lake is up, and calling for its victim.
TELL. Naught's to be done with idle talking here.
Time presses on — the man must be assisted.
Say, boatman, will you venture?
RUODI. No; not I.
TELL. In God's name, then, give me the boat! I will
With my poor strength, see what is to be done!
KUONI. Ha, noble Tell!
WERNI. That's like a gallant huntsman!
BAUM. You are my angel, my preserver, Tell.
TELL. I may preserve you from the viceroy's power
But from the tempest's rage another must.

* Bürglen, the birthplace and residence of Tell. A chapel erected in 1522 remains on the spot formerly occupied by his house.

Yet you had better fall into God's hands,
Than into those of men. [*To the herdsman.*
Herdsman, do thou
Console my wife, should aught of ill befall me.
I do but what I may not leave undone.
[*He leaps into the boat.*

KUONI (*to the fisherman*).
A pretty man to be a boatman, truly!
What Tell could risk you dared not venture on.
RUODI. Far better men than I would not ape Tell.
There does not live his fellow 'mong the mountains.
WERNI (*who has ascended a rock*).
He pushes off. God help thee now, brave sailor!
Look how his bark is reeling on the waves!
KUONI (*on the shore*).
The surge has swept clean over it. And now
Tis out of sight. Yet stay, there 'tis again!
Stoutly he stems the breakers, noble fellow!
SEPPI. Here come the troopers hard as they can ride!
KUONI. Heavens! so they do! Why, that was help, indeed.
[*Enter a troop of horsemen.*
1ST H. Give up the murderer! You have him here!
2D H. This way he came! 'Tis useless to conceal him!
RUODI *and* KUONI.
Whom do you mean?
FIRST HORSEMAN (*discovering the boat*).
The devil! What do I see?
WERNI (*from above*).
Is't he in yonder boat ye seek? Ride on,
If you lay to, you may o'ertake him yet.
2D H. Curse on you, he's escaped!
FIRST HORSEMAN (*to the shepherd and fisherman*).
You helped him off,
And you shall pay for it. Fall on their herds!
Down with the cottage! burn it! beat it down!
[*They rush off.*
SEPPI (*hurrying after them*). Oh, my poor lambs!
KUONI (*following him*). Unhappy me, my herds!
WERNI. The tyrants!

RUODI (*wringing his hands*).
Righteous Heaven! Oh, when will come
Deliverance to this devoted land?
[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A lime-tree in front of STAUFFACHER'S *house at Steinen, in Schwytz, upon the public road, near a bridge.*

WERNER STAUFFACHER *and* PFEIFFER, *of Lucerne, enter into conversation.*

PFEIFF. Ay, ay, friend Stauffacher, as I have said,
Swear not to Austria, if you can help it.
Hold by the empire stoutly as of yore,
And God preserve you in your ancient freedom!
[*Presses his hand warmly and is going.*
STAUFF. Wait till my mistress comes. Now do! You are
My guest in Schwytz — I in Lucerne am yours.
PFEIFF. Thanks! thanks! But I must reach Gersau to-day.
Whatever grievances your rulers' pride
And grasping avarice may yet inflict,
Bear them in patience — soon a change may come.
Another emperor may mount the throne.
But Austria's once, and you are hers forever.
[*Exit.*

[STAUFFACHER *sits down sorrowfully upon a bench under the lime tree. Gertrude, his wife, enters, and finds him in this posture. She places herself near him, and looks at him for some time in silence.*

GERT. So sad, my love! I scarcely know thee now.
For many a day in silence I have marked
A moody sorrow furrowing thy brow.
Some silent grief is weighing on thy heart;
Trust it to me. I am thy faithful wife,
And I demand my half of all thy cares.
[STAUFEACHER *gives her his hand and is silent.*
Tell me what can oppress thy spirits thus?

Thy toil is blest — the world goes well with thee —
Our barns are full — our cattle many a score;
Our handsome team of sleek and well-fed steeds,
Brought from the mountain pastures safely home,
To winter in their comfortable stalls.
There stands thy house — no nobleman's more fair!
'Tis newly built with timber of the best,
All grooved and fitted with the nicest skill;
Its many glistening windows tell of comfort!
'Tis quartered o'er with scutcheons of all hues,
And proverbs sage, which passing travellers
Linger to read, and ponder o'er their meaning.

STAUFF. The house is strongly built, and handsomely,
But, ah! the ground on which we built it totters.

GERT. Tell me, dear Werner, what you mean by that?

STAUFF. No later since than yesterday, I sat
Beneath this linden, thinking with delight,
How fairly all was finished, when from Küssnacht
The viceroy and his men came riding by.
Before this house he halted in surprise:
At once I rose, and, as beseemed his rank,
Advanced respectfully to greet the lord,
To whom the emperor delegates his power,
As judge supreme within our Canton here.
"Who is the owner of this house?" he asked,
With mischief in his thoughts, for well he knew.
With prompt decision, thus I answered him:
"The emperor, your grace — my lord and yours,
And held by me in fief." On this he answered,
"I am the emperor's viceregent here,
And will not that each peasant churl should build
At his own pleasure, bearing him as freely
As though he were the master in the land.
I shall make bold to put a stop to this!"
So saying he, with menaces, rode off,
And left me musing, with a heavy heart,
On the fell purpose that his words betrayed.

GERT. Mine own dear lord and husband! Wilt thou take

A word of honest counsel from thy wife?
I boast to be the noble Iberg's child,
A man of wide experience. Many a time,
As we sat spinning in the winter nights,
My sisters and myself, the people's chiefs
Were wont to gather round our father's hearth,
To read the old imperial charters, and
To hold sage converse on the country's weal.
Then heedfully I listened, marking well
What or the wise men thought, or good man wished,
And garnered up their wisdom in my heart.
Hear then, and mark me well; for thou wilt see,
I long have known the grief that weighs thee down.
The viceroy hates thee, fain would injure thee,
For thou hast crossed his wish to bend the Swiss
In homage to this upstart house of princes,
And kept them stanch, like their good sires of old,
In true allegiance to the empire. Say.
Is't not so, Werner? Tell me, am I wrong?

STAUFF. 'Tis even so. For this doth Gessler hate me.

GERT. He burns with envy, too, to see thee living
Happy and free on thy inheritance,
For he has none. From the emperor himself
Thou holdest in fief the lands thy fathers left thee.
There's not a prince in the empire that can show
A better title to his heritage;
For thou hast over thee no lord but one,
And he the mightiest of all Christian kings.
Gessler, we know, is but a younger son,
His only wealth the knightly cloak he wears;
He therefore views an honest man's good fortune
With a malignant and a jealous eye.
Long has he sworn to compass thy destruction
As yet thou art uninjured. Wilt thou wait
Till he may safely give his malice scope?
A wise man would anticipate the blow.

STAUFF. What's to be done?

GERT. Now hear what I advise.
Thou knowest well, how here with us in Schwytz,
All worthy men are groaning underneath
This Gessler's grasping, grinding tyranny.
Doubt not the men of Unterwald as well,
And Uri, too, are chafing like ourselves,
At this oppressive and heart-wearying yoke.
For there, across the lake, the Landenberg
Wields the same iron rule as Gessler here —
No fishing-boat comes over to our side
But brings the tidings of some new encroachment,
Some outrage fresh, more grievous than the last.
Then it were well that some of you — true men —
Men sound at heart, should secretly devise
How best to shake this hateful thraldom off.
Well do I know that God would not desert you,
But lend his favor to the righteous cause.
Hast thou no friend in Uri, say, to whom
Thou frankly may'st unbosom all thy thoughts?

STAUFF. I know full many a gallant fellow there,
And nobles, too, — great men, of high repute,
In whom I can repose unbounded trust. [*Rising.*
Wife! What a storm of wild and perilous thoughts
Hast thou stirred up within my tranquil breast?
The darkest musings of my bosom thou
Hast dragged to light, and placed them full before me,
And what I scarce dared harbor e'en in thought,
Thou speakest plainly out, with fearless tongue.
But hast thou weighed well what thou urgest thus?
Discord will come, and the fierce clang of arms,
To scare this valley's long unbroken peace,
If we, a feeble shepherd race, shall dare
Him to the fight that lords it o'er the world.
Even now they only wait some fair pretext
For setting loose their savage warrior hordes,
To scourge and ravage this devoted land,
To lord it o'er us with the victor's rights,

And 'neath the show of lawful chastisement,
Despoil us of our chartered liberties.

GERT. You, too, are men; can wield a battle-axe
As well as they. God ne'er deserts the brave.

STAUFF. Oh wife! a horrid, ruthless fiend is war,
That strikes at once the shepherd and his flock.

GERT. Whate'er great heaven inflicts we must endure;
No heart of noble temper brooks injustice.

STAUFF. This house — thy pride — war, unrelenting war,
Will burn it down.

GERT. And did I think this heart
Enslaved and fettered to the things of earth,
With my own hand I'd hurl the kindling torch.

STAUFF. Thou hast faith in human kindness, wife; but war
Spares not the tender infant in its cradle.

GERT. There is a friend to innocence in heaven!
Look forward, Werner — not behind you, now!

STAUFF. We men may perish bravely, sword in hand;
But oh, what fate, my Gertrude, may be thine?

GERT. None are so weak, but one last choice is left.
A spring from yonder bridge, and I am free!

STAUFF. (*embracing her*).
Well may he fight for hearth and home that clasps
A heart so rare as thine against his own!
What are the hosts of emperors to him!
Gertrude, farewell! I will to Uri straight.
There lives my worthy comrade, Walter Furst,
His thoughts and mine upon these times are one.
There, too, resides the noble Banneret
Of Attinghaus. High though of blood he be,
He loves the people, honors their old customs.
With both of these I will take counsel how
To rid us bravely of our country's foe.
Farewell! and while I am away, bear thou
A watchful eye in management at home.
The pilgrim journeying to the house of God,
And pious monk, collecting for his cloister,
To these give liberally from purse and garner.
Stauffacher's house would not be hid. Right out

Upon the public way it stands, and offers
To all that pass an hospitable roof.

[*While they are retiring,* TELL *enters with* BAUMGARTEN.

TELL. Now, then, you have no further need of me.
Enter yon house. 'Tis Werner Stauffacher's,
A man that is a father to distress.
See, there he is himself! Come, follow me.

[*They retire up. Scene changes.*

SCENE III.

A common near Altdorf. On an eminence in the background a castle in progress of erection, and so far advanced that the outline of the whole may be distinguished. The back part is finished; men are working at the front. Scaffolding, on which the workmen are going up and down. A slater is seen upon the highest part of the roof. All is bustle and activity.

TASKMASTER, MASON, WORKMEN, *and* LABORERS.

TASK. (*with a stick, urging on the workmen*).
Up, up! You've rested long enough. To work!
The stones here, now the mortar, and the lime!
And let his lordship see the work advanced
When next he comes. These fellows crawl like snails!

[*To two laborers with loads.*

What! call ye that a load? Go, double it.
Is this the way ye earn your wages, laggards?

1ST W. 'Tis very hard that we must bear the stones,
To make a keep and dungeon for ourselves!

TASK. What's that you mutter? 'Tis a worthless race,
And fit for nothing but to milk their cows,
And saunter idly up and down the mountains.

OLD MAN (*sinks down exhausted*).
I can no more.

TASK. (*shaking him*).
Up, up, old man, to work!

1ST W. Have you no bowels of compassion, thus
To press so hard upon a poor old man,
That scarce can drag his feeble limbs along?

MASTER MASON *and* WORKMEN.

Shame, shame upon you — shame! It cries to heaven!

TASK. Mind your own business. I but do my duty.

1ST W. Pray, master, what's to be the name of this
Same castle when 'tis built?

TASK. The keep of Uri;
For by it we shall keep you in subjection.

WORK. The keep of Uri.

TASK. Well, why laugh at that?

2D W. So you'll keep Uri with this paltry place!

1ST W. How many molehills such as that must first
Be piled above each other ere you make
A mountain equal to the least in Uri?

[TASKMASTER *retires up the stage.*

MAS. M. I'll drown the mallet in the deepest lake,
That served my hand on this accursed pile.

[*Enter* TELL *and* STAUFFACHER.

STAUFF. Oh, that I had not lived to see this sight!

TELL. Here 'tis not good to be. Let us proceed.

STAUFF. Am I in Uri, in the land of freedom?

MAS. M. Oh, sir, if you could only see the vaults
Beneath these towers. The man that tenants them
Will never hear the cock crow more.

STAUFF. O God!

MASON. Look at these ramparts and these buttresses,
That seem as they were built to last forever.

TELL. Hands can destroy whatever hands have reared.

[*Pointing to the mountains.*

That house of freedom God hath built for us.

[*A drum is heard. People enter bearing a cap upon a pole, followed by a crier. Women and children thronging tumultuously after them.*

1ST W. What means the drum? Give heed!

MASON. Why here's a mumming!
And look, the cap, — what can they mean by that?

CRIER. In the emperor's name, give ear!

WORK. Hush! silence! hush!

CRIER. Ye men of Uri, ye do see this cap!
It will be set upon a lofty pole
In Altdorf, in the market-place: and this
Is the lord governor's good will and pleasure,
The cap shall have like honor as himself,
And all shall reverence it with bended knee,
And head uncovered; thus the king will know
Who are his true and loyal subjects here:
His life and goods are forfeit to the crown,
That shall refuse obedience to the order.
[*The people burst out into laughter. The drum beats, and the procession passes on.*

1ST W. A strange device to fall upon, indeed!
Do reverence to a cap! a pretty farce!
Heard ever mortal anything like this?

MAS. M. Down to a cap on bended knee, forsooth!
Rare jesting this with men of sober sense!

1ST W. Nay, were it but the imperial crown, indeed!
But 'tis the cap of Austria! I've seen it
Hanging above the throne in Gessler's hall.

MASON. The cap of Austria! Mark that! A snare
To get us into Austria's power, by heaven!

WORK. No freeborn man will stoop to such disgrace.

MAS. M. Come — to our comrades, and advise with them!
[*They retire up.*

TELL (*to* STAUFFACHER).
You see how matters stand. Farewell, my friend!

STAUFF. Whither away? Oh, leave us not so soon.

TELL. They look for me at home. So fare ye well.

STAUFF. My heart's so full, and has so much to tell you.

TELL. Words will not make a heart that's heavy light.

STAUFF. Yet words may possibly conduct to deeds.

TELL. All we can do is to endure in silence.

STAUFF. But shall we bear what is not to be borne?

TELL. Impetuous rulers have the shortest reigns.
When the fierce south wind rises from his chasms,
Men cover up their fires, the ships in haste
Make for the harbor, and the mighty spirit
Sweeps o'er the earth, and leaves no trace behind.
Let every man live quietly at home;
Peace to the peaceful rarely is denied.

STAUFF. And is it thus you view our grievances?
TELL. The serpent stings not till it is provoked.
Let them alone; they'll weary of themselves,
Whene'er they see we are not to be roused.
STAUFF. Much might be done — did we stand fast together.
TELL. When the ship founders, he will best escape
Who seeks no other's safety but his own.
STAUFF. And you desert the common cause so coldly?
TELL. A man can safely count but on himself!
STAUFF. Nay, even the weak grow strong by union.
TELL. But the strong man is the strongest when alone.
STAUFF. Your country, then, cannot rely on you
If in despair she rise against her foes.
TELL. Tell rescues the lost sheep from yawning gulfs:
Is he a man, then, to desert his friends?
Yet, whatsoe'er you do, spare me from council!
I was not born to ponder and select;
But when your course of action is resolved,
Then call on Tell; you shall not find him fail.
[*Exeunt severally. A sudden tumult is heard around the scaffolding.*
MASON (*running in*). What's wrong?
FIRST WORKMAN (*running forward*).
The slater's fallen from the roof.
BERTHA (*rushing in*).
Is he dashed to pieces? Run — save him, help!
If help be possible, save him! Here is gold.
[*Throws her trinkets among the people.*
MASON. Hence with your gold, — your universal charm,
And remedy for ill! When you have torn
Fathers from children, husbands from their wives,
And scattered woe and wail throughout the land,
You think with gold to compensate for all.
Hence! Till we saw you we were happy men;
With you came misery and dark despair.
BERTHA (*to the* TASKMASTER, *who has returned*).
Lives he?
[TASKMASTER *shakes his head.*
Ill-fated towers, with curses built,
And doomed with curses to be tenanted! [*Exit.*

Scene IV.

The House of Walter Furst. Walter Furst *and* Arnold Von Melchthal *enter simultaneously at different sides.*

Melch. Good Walter Furst.
Furst. If we should be surprised!
Stay where you are. We are beset with spies.
Melch. Have you no news for me from Unterwald?
What of my father? 'Tis not to be borne,
Thus to be pent up like a felon here!
What have I done of such a heinous stamp,
To skulk and hide me like a murderer?
I only laid my staff across the fingers
Of the pert varlet, when before my eyes,
By order of the governor, he tried
To drive away my handsome team of oxen.
Furst. You are too rash by far. He did no more
Than what the governor had ordered him.
You had transgressed, and therefore should have paid
The penalty, however hard, in silence.
Melch. Was I to brook the fellow's saucy words?
"That if the peasant must have bread to eat,
"Why, let him go and draw the plough himself!"
It cut me to the very soul to see
My oxen, noble creatures, when the knave
Unyoked them from the plough. As though they felt
The wrong, they lowed and butted with their horns.
On this I could contain myself no longer,
And, overcome by passion, struck him down.
Furst. Oh, we old men can scarce command ourselves!
And can we wonder youth shall break its bounds?
Melch. I'm only sorry for my father's sake!
To be away from him, that needs so much
My fostering care! The governor detests him,
Because he hath, whene'er occasion served,
Stood stoutly up for right and liberty.

Therefore they'll bear him hard — the poor old man!
And there is none to shield him from their gripe.
Come what come may, I must go home again.

FURST. Compose yourself, and wait in patience till
We get some tidings o'er from Unterwald.
Away! away! I hear a knock! Perhaps
A message from the viceroy! Get thee in!
You are not safe from Landenberger's * arm
In Uri, for these tyrants pull together.

MELCH. They teach us Switzers what we ought to do.

FURST. Away! I'll call you when the coast is clear.

[MELCHTHAL *retires.*

Unhappy youth! I dare not tell him all
The evil that my boding heart predicts!
Who's there? The door ne'er opens but I look
For tidings of mishap. Suspicion lurks
With darkling treachery in every nook.
Even to our inmost rooms they force their way,
These myrmidons of power; and soon we'll need
To fasten bolts and bars upon our doors.

[*He opens the door and steps back in surprise as* WERNER STAUFFACHER *enters.*

What do I see? You, Werner? Now, by Heaven!
A valued guest, indeed. No man e'er set
His foot across this threshold more esteemed.
Welcome! thrice welcome, Werner, to my roof!
What brings you here? What seek you here in Uri?

STAUFF. (*shakes* FURST *by the hand*).
The olden times and olden Switzerland.

FURST. You bring them with you. See how I'm rejoiced,
My heart leaps at the very sight of you.
Sit down — sit down, and tell me how you left

* Berenger von Landenberg, a man of noble family in Thurgau, and governor of Unterwald, infamous for his cruelties to the Swiss, and particularly to the venerable Henry of the Halden. He was slain at the battle of Morgarten in 1315.

Your charming wife, fair Gertrude? Iber[illegible]
child,
And clever as her father. Not a man,
That wends from Germany, by Meinrad's Cell,*
To Italy, but praises far and wide
Your house's hospitality. But say,
Have you came here direct from Flüelen,
And have you noticed nothing on your way,
Before you halted at my door?

STAUFF. (*sits down*). I saw
A work in progress, as I came along,
I little thought to see — that likes me ill.

FURST. O friend! you've lighted on my thought at once.

STAUFF. Such things in Uri ne'er were known before.
Never was prison here in man's remembrance,
Nor ever any stronghold but the grave.

FURST. You name it well. It is the grave of freedom.

STAUFF. Friend, Walter Furst, I will be plain with you.
No idle curiosity it is
That brings me here, but heavy cares. I left
Thraldom at home, and thraldom meets me here.
Our wrongs, e'en now, are more than we can
bear.
And who shall tell us where they are to end?
From eldest time the Switzer has been free,
Accustomed only to the mildest rule.
Such things as now we suffer ne'er were known
Since herdsmen first drove cattle to the hills.

FURST. Yes, our oppressions are unparalleled!
Why, even our own good lord of Attinghaus,
Who lived in olden times, himself declares
They are no longer to be tamely borne.

STAUFF. In Unterwalden yonder 'tis the same;
And bloody has the retribution been.
The imperial seneschal, the Wolfshot, who
At Rossberg dwelt, longed for forbidden fruit —
Baumgarten's wife, that lives at Alzellen,
He wished to overcome in shameful sort,
On which the husband slew him with his axe.

* A cell built in the ninth century by Meinrad, Count Hohenzollern, the founder of the Convent of Einsiedeln, subsequently alluded to in the text.

[illegible]. Oh, Heaven is just in all its judgments still!
Baumgarten, say you? A most worthy man.
Has he escaped, and is he safely hid?

STAUFF. Your son-in-law conveyed him o'er the lake,
And he lies hidden in my house at Steinen.
He brought the tidings with him of a thing
That has been done at Sarnen, worse than all,
A thing to make the very heart run blood!

FURST (*attentively*).
Say on. What is it?

STAUFF. There dwells in Melchthal, then,
Just as you enter by the road from Kearns,
An upright man, named Henry of the Halden,
A man of weight and influence in the Diet.

FURST. Who knows him not? But what of him? Proceed.

STAUFF. The Landenberg, to punish some offence,
Committed by the old man's son, it seems,
Had given command to take the youth's best pair
Of oxen from his plough: on which the lad
Struck down the messenger and took to flight.

FURST. But the old father — tell me, what of him?

STAUFF. The Landenberg sent for him, and required
He should produce his son upon the spot;
And when the old man protested, and with truth,
That he knew nothing of the fugitive,
The tyrant called his torturers.

FURST (*springs up and tries to lead him to the other side*).
Hush, no more!

STAUFFACHER (*with increasing warmth*).
"And though thy son," he cried, "Has escaped me now,
I have thee fast, and thou shalt feel my vengeance."
With that they flung the old man to the earth,
And plunged the pointed steel into his eyes.

FURST. Merciful heavens!

MELCH. (*rushing out*).
Into his eyes, his eyes?

STAUFF. (*addresses himself in astonishment to* WALTER FURST).
Who is this youth?
MELCH. (*grasping him convulsively*).
Into his eyes? Speak, speak!
FURST. Oh, miserable hour!
STAUFF. Who is it, tell me?
[STAUFFACHER *makes a sign to him.*
It is his son! All righteous heaven!
MELCH. And I
Must be from thence! What! into both his eyes?
FURST. Be calm, be calm; and bear it like a man!
MELCH. And all for me — for my mad wilful folly!
Blind, did you say? Quite blind — and both his eyes?
STAUFF. Even so. The fountain of his sight's dried up.
He ne'er will see the blessed sunshine more.
FURST. Oh, spare his anguish!
MELCH. Never, never more!
[*Presses his hands upon his eyes and is silent for some moments; then turning from one to the other, speaks in a subdued tone, broken by sobs.*
O the eye's light, of all the gifts of heaven,
The dearest best! From light all beings live —
Each fair created thing — the very plants
Turn with a joyful transport to the light,
And he — he must drag on through all his days
In endless darkness! Never more for him
The sunny meads shall glow, the flowerets bloom;
Nor shall he more behold the roseate tints
Of the iced mountain top! To die is nothing,
But to have life, and not have sight — oh, that
Is misery indeed! Why do you look
So piteously at me? I have two eyes,
Yet to my poor blind father can give neither!
No, not one gleam of that great sea of light,
That with its dazzling splendor floods my gaze.
STAUFF. Ah, I must swell the measure of your grief,
Instead of soothing it. The worst, alas!

Remains to tell. They've stripped him of his all;
Naught have they left him, save his staff, on which,
Blind and in rags, he moves from door to door.

MELCH. Naught but his staff to the old eyeless man!
Stripped of his all — even of the light of day,
The common blessing of the meanest wretch.
Tell me no more of patience, of concealment!
Oh, what a base and coward thing am I,
That on mine own security I thought
And took no care of thine! Thy precious head
Left as a pledge within the tyrant's grasp!
Hence, craven-hearted prudence, hence! And all
My thoughts be vengeance, and the despot's blood! [now —
I'll seek him straight — no power shall stay me
And at his hands demand my father's eyes.
I'll beard him 'mid a thousand myrmidons!
What's life to me, if in his heart's best blood
I cool the fever of this mighty anguish.
[*He is going.*

FURST. Stay, this is madness, Melchthal! What avails
Your single arm against his power? He sits
At Sarnen high within his kindly keep,
And, safe within its battlemented walls,
May laugh to scorn your unavailing rage.

MELCH. And though he sat within the icy domes
Of yon far Schreckhorn — ay, or higher, where
Veiled since eternity, the Jungfrau soars,
Still to the tyrant would I make my way;
With twenty comrades minded like myself,
I'd lay his fastness level with the earth!
And if none follow me, and if you all,
In terror for your homesteads and your herds,
Bow in submission to the tyrant's yoke,
I'll call the herdsmen on the hills around me,
And there beneath heaven's free and boundless roof,
Where men still feel as men, and hearts are true
Proclaim aloud this foul enormity!

STAUFF. (*to* FURST).
'Tis at its height — and are we then to wait
Till some extremity ——

MELCHTHAL.
What extremity
Remains for apprehension, where men's eyes
Have ceased to be secure within their sockets?
Are we defenceless? Wherefore did we learn
To bend the crossbow — wield the battle-axe?
What living creature, but in its despair,
Finds for itself a weapon of defence?
The baited stag will turn, and with the show
Of his dread antlers hold the hounds at bay;
The chamois drags the huntsman down the abyss;
The very ox, the partner of man's toil,
The sharer of his roof, that meekly bends
The strength of his huge neck beneath the yoke,
Springs up, if he's provoked, whets his strong horn,
And tosses his tormenter to the clouds.

FURST. If the three Cantons thought as we three do,
Something might, then, be done, with good effect.

STAUFF. When Uri calls, when Unterwald replies,
Schwytz will be mindful of her ancient league.*

* The League, or Bond, of the Three Cantons was of very ancient origin. They met and renewed it from time to time, especially when their liberties were threatened with danger. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the end of the thirteenth century, when Albert of Austria became emperor, and when, possibly, for the first time, the bond was reduced to writing. As it is important to the understanding of many passages of the play, a translation is subjoined of the oldest known document relating to it. The original, which is in Latin and German, is dated in August, 1291, and is under the seals of the whole of the men of Schwytz, the commonalty of the vale of Uri, and the whole of the men of the upper and lower vales of Stanz.

THE BOND.

Be it known to every one, that the men of the Dale of Uri, the Community of Schwytz, as also the men of the mountains of Unterwald, in consideration of the evil times, have full confidently bound themselves, and sworn to help each other with all their power and might, property and people, against all who shall do violence to them, or any of them. That is our Ancient Bond.

Whoever hath a Seignior, let him obey according to the conditions of his service.

We are agreed to receive into these dales no Judge who is not a countryman and indweller, or who hath bought his place.

Every controversy amongst the sworn confederates shall be determined

MELCH. I've many friends in Unterwald, and none
That would not gladly venture life and limb
If fairly backed and aided by the rest.
Oh, sage and reverend fathers of this land,
Here do I stand before your riper years,
An unskilled youth whose voice must in the Diet
Still be subdued into respectful silence.
Do not, because that I am young and want
Experience, slight my counsel and my words.
'Tis not the wantonness of youthful blood
That fires my spirit; but a pang so deep
That even the flinty rocks must pity me.
You, too, are fathers, heads of families,
And you must wish to have a virtuous son
To reverence your gray hairs and shield your eyes
With pious and affectionate regard.
Do not, I pray, because in limb and fortune
You still are unassailed, and still your eyes
Revolve undimmed and sparkling in their spheres;
Oh, do not, therefore, disregard our wrongs!
Above you, too, doth hang the tyrant's sword.
You, too, have striven to alienate the land
From Austria. This was all my father's crime:
You share his guilt and may his punishment.

STAUFFACHER (*to* FURST).
Do thou resolve! I am prepared to follow.

FURST. First let us learn what steps the noble lords
Von Sillinen and Attinghaus propose.
Their names would rally thousands in the cause.

MELCH. Is there a name within the Forest Mountains

by some of the sagest of their number, and if any one shall challenge their judgment, then shall he be constrained to obey it by the rest.

Whoever intentionally or deceitfully kills another shall be executed, and whoever shelters him shall be banished.

Whoever burns the property of another shall no longer be regarded as a countryman, and whoever shelters him shall make good the damage done.

Whoever injures another, or robs him, and hath property in our country, shall make satisfaction out of the same.

No one shall distrain a debtor without a judge, nor any one who is not his debtor, or the surety for such debtor.

Every one in these dales shall submit to the judge, or we, the sworn confederates, all will take satisfaction for all the injury occasioned by his contumacy. And if in any internal division the one party will not accept justice, all the rest shall help the other party. These decrees shall, God willing, endure eternally for our general advantage.

That carries more respect than thine — and thine?
To names like these the people cling for help
With confidence — such names are household words.
Rich was your heritage of manly virtue,
And richly have you added to its stores.
What need of nobles? Let us do the work
Ourselves. Although we stood alone, methinks
We should be able to maintain our rights.

STAUFF. The nobles' wrongs are not so great as ours.
The torrent that lays waste the lower grounds
Hath not ascended to the uplands yet.
But let them see the country once in arms
They'll not refuse to lend a helping hand.

FURST. Were there an umpire 'twixt ourselves and Austria,
Justice and law might then decide our quarrel.
But our oppressor is our emperor, too,
And judge supreme. 'Tis God must help us, then,
And our own arm! Be yours the task to rouse
The men of Schwytz; I'll rally friends in Uri.
But whom are we to send to Unterwald?

MELCH. Thither send me. Whom should it more concern?

FURST. No, Melchthal, no; thou art my guest, and I
Must answer for thy safety.

MELCHTHAL. Let me go.
I know each forest track and mountain pass;
Friends too I'll find, be sure, on every hand,
To give me willing shelter from the foe.

STAUFF. Nay, let him go; no traitors harbor there:
For tyranny is so abhorred in Unterwald
No minions can be found to work her will.
In the low valleys, too, the Alzeller
Will gain confederates and rouse the country.

MELCH. But how shall we communicate, and not
Awaken the suspicion of the tyrants?

STAUFF. Might we not meet at Brunnen or at Treib,
Hard by the spot where merchant-vessels land?

FURST. We must not go so openly to work.
Hear my opinion. On the lake's left bank,
As we sail hence to Brunnen, right against
The Mytenstein, deep-hidden in the wood
A meadow lies, by shepherds called the Rootli,
Because the wood has been uprooted there.
'Tis where our Canton boundaries verge on yours; — [*To* MELCHTHAL.
Your boat will carry you across from Schwytz. [*To* STAUFFACHER.
Thither by lonely by-paths let us wend
At midnight and deliberate o'er our plans.
Let each bring with him there ten trusty men,
All one at heart with us; and then we may
Consult together for the general weal,
And, with God's guidance, fix our onward course.

STAUFF. So let it be. And now your true right hand!
Yours, too, young man! and as we now three men
Among ourselves thus knit our hands together
In all sincerity and truth, e'en so
Shall we three Cantons, too, together stand
In victory and defeat, in life and death.

FURST *and* MELCHTHAL.
In life and death.
[*They hold their hands clasped together for some moments in silence.*

MELCHTHAL. Alas, my old blind father!
Thou canst no more behold the day of freedom;
But thou shalt hear it. When from Alp to Alp
The beacon-fires throw up their flaming signs,
And the proud castles of the tyrants fall,
Into thy cottage shall the Switzer burst,
Bear the glad tidings to thine ear, and o'er
Thy darkened way shall Freedom's radiance pour.

ACT II.

Scene I.

The Mansion of the Baron of Attinghausen. *A Gothic hall, decorated with escutcheons and helmets. The* Baron, *a gray-headed man, eighty-five years old, tall, and of a commanding mien, clad in a furred pelisse, and leaning on a staff tipped with chamois horn.* Kuoni *and six hinds standing round him, with rakes and scythes.* Ulrich of Rudenz *enters in the costume of a knight.*

Rud. Uncle, I'm here! Your will?

Attinghausen. First let me share,
After the ancient custom of our house,
The morning-cup with these my faithful servants!
[*He drinks from a cup, which is then passed round.*
Time was I stood myself in field and wood,
With mine own eyes directing all their toil,
Even as my banner led them in the fight,
Now I am only fit to play the steward;
And, if the genial sun come not to me,
I can no longer seek it on the mountains.
Thus slowly, in an ever-narrowing sphere,
I move on to the narrowest and the last,
Where all life's pulses cease. I now am but
The shadow of my former self, and that
Is fading fast — 'twill soon be but a name.

Kuoni (*offering* Rudenz *the cup*).
A pledge, young master!
[Rudenz *hesitates to take the cup.*
Nay, sir, drink it off!
One cup, one heart! You know our proverb, sir!

Atting. Go, children, and at eve, when work is done,
We'll meet and talk the country's business over.
[*Exeunt Servants.*
Belted and plumed, and all thy bravery on!
Thou art for Altdorf — for the castle, boy?

Rud. Yes, uncle. Longer may I not delay ——

Attinghausen (*sitting down*).
Why in such haste? Say, are thy youthful hours

Doled in such niggard measure that thou must
Be chary of them to thy aged uncle?

RUD. I see, my presence is not needed here,
I am but as a stranger in this house.

ATTINGHAUSEN (*gazes fixedly at him for a considerable time*).
Alas, thou art indeed! Alas, that home
To thee has grown so strange! Oh, Uly! Uly!
I scarce do know thee now, thus decked in silks,
The peacock's feather* flaunting in thy cap,
And purple mantle round thy shoulders flung;
Thou lookest upon the peasant with disdain,
And takest with a blush his honest greeting.

RUD. All honor due to him I gladly pay,
But must deny the right he would usurp.

ATTING. The sore displeasure of the king is resting
Upon the land, and every true man's heart
Is full of sadness for the grievous wrongs
We suffer from our tyrants. Thou alone
Art all unmoved amid the general grief.
Abandoning thy friends, thou takest thy stand
Beside thy country's foes, and, as in scorn
Of our distress, pursuest giddy joys,
Courting the smiles of princes, all the while
Thy country bleeds beneath their cruel scourge.

RUD. The land is sore oppressed; I know it, uncle.
But why? Who plunged it into this distress?
A word, one little easy word, might buy
Instant deliverance from such dire oppression,
And win the good-will of the emperor.
Woe unto those who seal the people's eyes,
And make them adverse to their country's good;
The men who, for their own vile, selfish ends,
Are seeking to prevent the Forest States
From swearing fealty to Austria's house,
As all the countries round about have done.
It fits their humor well, to take their seats

* The Austrian knights were in the habit of wearing a plume of peacocks' feathers in their helmets. After the overthrow of the Austrian dominion in Switzerland it was made highly penal to wear the peacock's feather at any public assembly there.

Amid the nobles on the Herrenbank;*
They'll have the Cæsar for their lord, forsooth,
That is to say, they'll have no lord at all.

ATTING. Must I hear this, and from thy lips, rash boy!

RUD. You urged me to this answer. Hear me out.
What, uncle, is the character you've stooped
To fill contentedly through life? Have you
No higher pride, than in these lonely wilds
To be the Landamman or Banneret,†
The petty chieftain of a shepherd race?
How! Were it not a far more glorious choice
To bend in homage to our royal lord,
And swell the princely splendors of his court,
Than sit at home, the peer of your own vassals,
And share the judgment-seat with vulgar clowns?

ATTING. Ah, Uly, Uly; all too well I see,
The tempter's voice has caught thy willing ear,
And poured its subtle poison in thy heart.

RUD. Yes, I conceal it not. It doth offend
My inmost soul to hear the stranger's gibes,
That taunt us with the name of "Peasant Nobles."
Think you the heart that's stirring here can brook,
While all the young nobility around
Are reaping honor under Hapsburg's banner,
That I should loiter, in inglorious ease,
Here on the heritage my fathers left,
And, in the dull routine of vulgar toil,
Lose all life's glorious spring? In other lands
Deeds are achieved. A world of fair renown
Beyond these mountains stirs in martial pomp.
My helm and shield are rusting in the hall;
The martial trumpet's spirit-stirring blast,
The herald's call, inviting to the lists,
Rouse not the echoes of these vales, where naught
Save cowherd's horn and cattle-bell is heard,
In one unvarying, dull monotony.

ATTING. Deluded boy, seduced by empty show!
Despise the land that gave thee birth! Ashamed

* The bench reserved for the nobility.

† The Landamman was an officer chosen by the Swiss Gemeinde, or Diet, to preside over them. The Banneret was an officer intrusted with the keeping of the state banner, and such others as were taken in battle.

Of the good ancient customs of thy sires!
The day will come, when thou, with burning tears,
Wilt long for home, and for thy native hills,
And that dear melody of tuneful herds,
Which now, in proud disgust, thou dost despise!
A day when thou wilt drink its tones in sadness,
Hearing their music in a foreign land.
Oh! potent is the spell that binds to home!
No, no, the cold, false world is not for thee.
At the proud court, with thy true heart thou wilt
Forever feel a stranger among strangers.
The world asks virtues of far other stamp
Than thou hast learned within these simple vales.
But go — go thither; barter thy free soul,
Take land in fief, become a prince's vassal,
Where thou might'st be lord paramount, and prince
Of all thine own unburdened heritage!
O, Uly, Uly, stay among thy people!
Go not to Altdorf. Oh, abandon not
The sacred cause of thy wronged native land!
I am the last of all my race. My name
Ends with me. Yonder hang my helm and shield;
They will be buried with me in the grave.*
And must I think, when yielding up my breath,
That thou but wait'st the closing of mine eyes,
To stoop thy knee to this new feudal court,
And take in vassalage from Austria's hands
The noble lands, which I from God received
Free and unfettered as the mountain air!

RUD. 'Tis vain for us to strive against the king.
The world pertains to him: — shall we alone,
In mad, presumptuous obstinacy strive
To break that mighty chain of lands, which he
Hath drawn around us with his giant grasp.
His are the markets, his the courts; his too
The highways; nay, the very carrier's horse,

* According to the custom by which, when the last male descendant of a noble family died, his sword, helmet, and shield were buried with him.

That traffics on the Gotthardt, pays him toll.
By his dominions, as within a net,
We are enclosed, and girded round about.
— And will the empire shield us? Say, can it
Protect itself 'gainst Austria's growing power?
To God, and not to emperors, must we look!
What store can on their promises be placed,
When they, to meet their own necessities,
Can pawn, and even alienate the towns
That flee for shelter 'neath the eagle's wings?*
No, uncle. It is wise and wholesome prudence,
In times like these, when faction's all abroad,
To own attachment to some mighty chief.
The imperial crown's transferred from line to line,†
It has no memory for faithful service:
But to secure the favor of these great
Hereditary masters, were to sow
Seed for a future harvest.

ATTINGHAUSEN. Art so wise?
Wilt thou see clearer than thy noble sires,
Who battled for fair freedom's costly gem,
With life, and fortune, and heroic arm?
Sail down the lake to Lucerne, there inquire,
How Austria's rule doth weigh the Cantons down.
Soon she will come to count our sheep, our cattle,
To portion out the Alps, e'en to their summits,
And in our own free woods to hinder us
From striking down the eagle or the stag;
To set her tolls on every bridge and gate,
Impoverish us to swell her lust of sway,
And drain our dearest blood to feed her wars.
No, if our blood must flow, let it be shed
In our own cause! We purchase liberty
More cheaply far than bondage.

RUDENZ. What can we,
A shepherd race, against great Albert's hosts?

* This frequently occurred. But in the event of an imperial city being mortgaged for the purpose of raising money it lost its freedom, and was considered as put out of the realm.

† An allusion to the circumstance of the imperial crown not being hereditary, but conferred by election on one of the counts of the empire.

ATTING. Learn, foolish boy, to know this shepherd race!
I know them, I have led them on in fight—
I saw them in the battle at Favenz.
Austria will try, forsooth, to force on us
A yoke we are determined not to bear!
Oh, learn to feel from what a race thou'rt sprung!
Cast not, for tinsel trash and idle show,
The precious jewel of thy worth away.
To be the chieftain of a freeborn race,
Bound to thee only by their unbought love,
Ready to stand — to fight — to die with thee,
Be that thy pride, be that thy noblest boast!
Knit to thy heart the ties of kindred — home —
Cling to the land, the dear land of thy sires,
Grapple to that with thy whole heart and soul!
Thy power is rooted deep and strongly here,
But in yon stranger world thou'lt stand alone,
A trembling reed beat down by every blast.
Oh come! 'tis long since we have seen thee, Uly!
Tarry but this one day. Only to-day
Go not to Altdorf. Wilt thou? Not to-day!
For this one day bestow thee on thy friends.
[*Takes his hand.*

RUD. I gave my word. Unhand me! I am bound.

ATTING. (*drops his hand and says sternly*).
Bound, didst thou say? Oh yes, unhappy boy,
Thou art, indeed. But not by word or oath.
Tis by the silken mesh of love thou'rt bound.
[RUDENZ *turns away.*
Ay, hide thee, as thou wilt. 'Tis she, I know,
Bertha of Bruneck, draws thee to the court;
'Tis she that chains thee to the emperor's service.
Thou think'st to win the noble, knightly maid,
By thy apostacy. Be not deceived.
She is held out before thee as a lure;
But never meant for innocence like thine.

RUD. No more; I've heard enough. So fare you we
[*Ex*

ATTING. Stay, Uly! Stay! Rash boy, he's gone! I ca
Nor hold him back, nor save him from d
struction.

And so the Wolfshot has deserted us;—
Others will follow his example soon.
This foreign witchery, sweeping o'er our hills,
Tears with its potent spell our youth away:
O luckless hour, when men and manners strange
Into these calm and happy valleys came,
To warp our primitive and guileless ways.
The new is pressing on with might. The old,
The good, the simple, fleeteth fast away.
New times come on. A race is springing up,
That think not as their fathers thought before!
What do I here? All, all are in the grave
With whom erewhile I moved and held converse;
My age has long been laid beneath the sod:
Happy the man who may not live to see
What shall be done by those that follow me!

Scene II.

A meadow surrounded by high rocks and wooded ground. On the rocks are tracks, with rails and ladders, by which the peasants are afterwards seen descending. In the background the lake is observed, and over it a moon rainbow in the early part of the scene. The prospect is closed by lofty mountains, with glaciers rising behind them. The stage is dark, but the lake and glaciers glisten in the moonlight.

Melchthal, Baumgarten, Winkelried, Meyer von Sarnen, Burkhart am Buhel, Arnold von Sewa, Klaus von der Flue, *and four other peasants, all armed.*

Melchthal (*behind the scenes*).
The mountain pass is open. Follow me
I see the rock, and little cross upon it:
This is the spot; here is the Rootli.
[*They enter with torches.*

Winkelried. Hark!

Sewa. The coast is clear.

Meyer. None of our comrades come?
We are the first, we Unterwaldeners.

Melch. How far is't in the night?

BAUM. The beacon watch
Upon the Selisberg has just called two.
[*A bell is heard at a distance.*
MEYER. Hush! Hark!
BUHEL. The forest chapel's matin bell
Chimes clearly o'er the lake from Switzerland.
VON F. The air is clear, and bears the sound so far.
MELCH. Go, you and you, and light some broken boughs,
Let's bid them welcome with a cheerful blaze.
[*Two peasants exeunt.*
SEWA. The moon shines fair to-night. Beneath its beams
The lake reposes, bright as burnished steel.
BUHEL. They'll have an easy passage.
WINK. (*pointing to the lake*). Ha! look there!
See you nothing?
MEYER. What is it? Ay, indeed!
A rainbow in the middle of the night.
MELCH. Formed by the bright reflection of the moon!
VON F. A sign most strange and wonderful, indeed!
Many there be who ne'er have seen the like.
SEWA. 'Tis doubled, see, a paler one above!
BAUM. A boat is gliding yonder right beneath it.
MELCH. That must be Werner Stauffacher! I knew
The worthy patriot would not tarry long.
[*Goes with* BAUMGARTEN *towards the shore.*
MEYER. The Uri men are like to be the last.
BUHEL. They're forced to take a winding circuit through
The mountains; for the viceroy's spies are out.
[*In the meanwhile the two peasants have kindled a fire in the centre of the stage.*
MELCH. (*on the shore*).
Who's there? The word?
STAUFF. (*from below*). Friends of the country.
[*All retire up the stage, towards the party landing from the boat. Enter* STAUFFACHER, ITEL, REDING, HANS AUF DER MAUER, JORG IM HOFE, CONRAD HUNN, ULRICH DER SCHMIDT, JOST VON WEILER, *and three other peasants, armed.*

ALL. Welcome!

[*While the rest remain behind exchanging greetings,* MELCHTHAL *comes forward with* STAUFFACHER.

MELCH. Oh, worthy Stauffacher, I've looked but now
On him, who could not look on me again.
I've laid my hands upon his rayless eyes,
And on their vacant orbits sworn a vow
Of vengeance, only to be cooled in blood.

STAUFF. Speak not of vengeance. We are here to meet
The threatened evil, not to avenge the past.
Now tell me what you've done, and what secured,
To aid the common cause in Unterwald.
How stands the peasantry disposed, and how
Yourself escaped the wiles of treachery?

MELCH. Through the Surenen's fearful mountain chain,
Where dreary ice-fields stretch on every side,
And sound is none, save the hoarse vulture's cry,
I reached the Alpine pasture, where the herds
From Uri and from Engelberg resort,
And turn their cattle forth to graze in common.
Still as I went along, I slaked my thirst
With the coarse oozings of the lofty glacier,
That through the crevices come foaming down,
And turned to rest me in the herdsman's cots,*
Where I was host and guest, until I gained
The cheerful homes and social haunts of men.
Already through these distant vales had spread
The rumor of this last atrocity;
And wheresoe'er I went, at every door,
Kind words and gentle looks were there to greet me.
I found these simple spirits all in arms
Against our rulers' tyrannous encroachments.
For as their Alps through each succeeding year
Yield the same roots, — their streams flow ever on
In the same channels, — nay, the clouds and winds

* These are the cots, or shealings, erected by the herdsmen for shelter while pasturing their herds on the mountains during the summer. These are left deserted in winter, during which period Melchthal's journey was taken.

The selfsame course unalterably pursue,
So have old customs there, from sire to son,
Been handed down, unchanging and unchanged;
Nor will they brook to swerve or turn aside
From the fixed, even tenor of their life.
With grasp of their hard hands they welcomed me —
Took from the walls their rusty falchions down —
And from their eyes the soul of valor flashed
With joyful lustre, as I spoke those names,
Sacred to every peasant in the mountains,
Your own and Walter Fürst's. Whate'er your voice
Should dictate as the right they swore to do;
And you they swore to follow e'en to death.
So sped I on from house to house, secure
In the guest's sacred privilege — and when
I reached at last the valley of my home,
Where dwell my kinsmen, scattered far and near —
And when I found my father stripped and blind,
Upon the stranger's straw, fed by the alms
Of charity ——

STAUFFACHER. Great heaven!

MELCHTHAL. Yet wept I not;
No — not in weak and unavailing tears
Spent I the force of my fierce, burning anguish,
Deep in my bosom, like some precious treasure,
I locked it fast, and thought on deeds alone.
Through every winding of the hills I crept —
No valley so remote but I explored it;
Nay, even at the glacier's ice-clad base,
I sought and found the homes of living men;
And still, where'er my wandering footsteps turned,
The self-same hatred of these tyrants met me.
For even there, at vegetation's verge,
Where the numbed earth is barren of all fruits,
There grasping hands had been stretched forth for plunder.
Into the hearts of all this honest race,

The story of my wrongs struck deep, and now
They to a man are ours ; both heart and hand.

STAUFF. Great things, indeed, you've wrought in little time.

MELCH. I did still more than this. The fortresses,
Rossberg and Sarnen, are the country's dread ;
For from behind their rocky walls the foe
Swoops, as the eagle from his eyrie, down,
And, safe himself, spreads havoc o'er the land.
With my own eyes I wished to weigh its strength,
So went to Sarnen, and explored the castle.

STAUFF. How ! Risk thyself even in the tiger's den ?

MELCH. Disguised in pilgrim's weeds I entered it ;
I saw the viceroy feasting at his board —
Judge if I'm master of myself or no !
I saw the tyrant, and I slew him not !

STAUFF. Fortune, indeed, has smiled upon your boldness.

[*Meanwhile the others have arrived and join* MELCHTHAL *and* STAUFFACHER.

Yet tell me now, I pray, who are the friends,
The worthy men, who came along with you ?
Make me acquainted with them, that we may
Speak frankly, man to man, and heart to heart.

MEYER. In the three Cantons, who, sir, knows not you ?
Meyer of Sarnen is my name ; and this
Is Struth of Winkelried, my sister's son.

STAUFF. No unknown name. A Winkelried it was
Who slew the dragoon in the fen at Weiler,
And lost his life in the encounter, too.

WINK. That, Master Stauffacher, was my grandfather.

MELCH. (*pointing to two peasants*).
These two are men belonging to the convent
Of Engelberg, and live behind the forest.
You'll not think ill of them, because they're serfs,
And sit not free upon the soil, like us.
They love the land, and bear a good repute.

STAUFFACHER (*to them*).
Give me your hands. He has good cause for thanks,

That unto no man owes his body's service.
But worth is worth, no matter where 'tis found.

HUNN. That is Herr Reding, sir, our old Landamman.

MEYER. I know him well. There is a suit between us,
About a piece of ancient heritage.
Herr Reding, we are enemies in court,
Here we are one. [*Shakes his hand.*

STAUFFACHER. That's well and bravely said.

WINK. Listen! They come. Hark to the horn of Uri!
[*On the right and left armed men are seen descending the rocks with torches.*

MAUER. Look, is not that God's pious servant there?
A worthy priest! The terrors of the night,
And the way's pains and perils scare not him,
A faithful shepherd caring for his flock.

BAUM. The Sacrist follows him, and Walter Fürst.
But where is Tell? I do not see him there.
[WALTER FURST, ROSSELMANN *the Pastor*, PETERMANN *the Sacrist*, KUONI *the Shepherd*, WERNI *the Huntsman*, RUODI *the Fisherman, and five other countrymen, thirty-three in all, advance and take their places round the fire.*

FURST. Thus must we, on the soil our fathers left us,
Creep forth by stealth to meet like murderers,
And in the night, that should their mantle lend
Only to crime and black conspiracy,
Assert our own good rights, which yet are clear
As is the radiance of the noonday sun.

MELCH. So be it. What is woven in gloom of night
Shall free and boldly meet the morning light.

ROSSEL. Confederates! listen to the words which God
Inspires my heart withal. Here we are met
To represent the general weal. In us
Are all the people of the land convened.
Then let us hold the Diet, as of old,
And as we're wont in peaceful times to do.
The time's necessity be our excuse
If there be aught informal in this meeting.
Still, wheresoe'er men strike for justice, there
Is God, and now beneath his heaven we stand.

STAUFF. 'Tis well advised. Let us, then, hold the Diet
According to our ancient usages.
Though it be night there's sunshine in our cause.
MELCH. Few though our numbers be, the hearts are here
Of the whole people; here the best are met.
HUNN. The ancient books may not be near at hand,
Yet are they graven in our inmost hearts.
ROSSEL. 'Tis well. And now, then, let a ring be formed,
And plant the swords of power within the ground.*
MAUER. Let the Landamman step into his place,
And by his side his secretaries stand.
SACRIST. There are three Cantons here. Which hath the right
To give the head to the united council?
MEIER ← Schwytz may contest the dignity with Uri,
We Unterwaldeners enter not the field.
MELCH. We stand aside. We are not suppliants here,
Invoking aid from our more potent friends.
STAUFF. Let Uri have the sword. Her banner takes
In battle the precedence of our own.
FURST. Schwytz, then, must share the honor of the sword;
For she's the honored ancestor of all.
ROSSEL. Let me arrange this generous controversy.
Uri shall lead in battle — Schwytz in council.
FURST (*gives* STAUFFACHER *his hand*).
Then take your place.
STAUFFACHER. Not I. Some older man.
HOFE. Ulrich, the smith, is the most aged here.
MAUER. A worthy man, but he is not a freeman;
No bondman can be judge in Switzerland.
STAUFF. Is not Herr Reding here, our old Landamman?
Where can we find a worthier man than he?
FURST. Let him be Amman and the Diet's chief?
You that agree with me hold up your hands!
[*All hold up their right hands.*
REDING (*stepping into the centre*).
I cannot lay my hands upon the books;

* It was the custom at the meetings of the Landes Gemeinde, or Diet, to set swords upright in the ground as emblems of authority.

But by yon everlasting stars I swear
Never to swerve from justice and the right.
[*The two swords are placed before him, and a circle formed; Schwytz in the centre, Uri on his right, Unterwald on his left.*

REDING (*resting on his battle-sword*).
Why, at the hour when spirits walk the earth,
Meet the three Cantons of the mountains here,
Upon the lake's inhospitable shore?
And what the purport of the new alliance
We here contract beneath the starry heaven?

STAUFFACHER (*entering the circle*).
No new alliance do we now contract,
But one our fathers framed, in ancient times,
We purpose to renew! For know, confederates,
Though mountain ridge and lake divide our bounds,
And every Canton's ruled by its own laws,
Yet are we but one race, born of one blood,
And all are children of one common home.

WINK. Then is the burden of our legends true,
That we came hither from a distant land?
Oh, tell us what you know, that our new league
May reap fresh vigor from the leagues of old.

STAUFF. Hear, then, what aged herdsmen tell. There dwelt
A mighty people in the land that lies
Back to the north. The scourge of famine came;
And in this strait 'twas publicly resolved,
That each tenth man, on whom the lot might fall
Should leave the country. They obeyed — and forth,
With loud lamentings, men and women went,
A mighty host; and to the south moved on,
Cutting their way through Germany by the sword,
Until they gained that pine-clad hills of ours;
Nor stopped they ever on their forward course,
Till at the shaggy dell they halted, where
The Müta flows through its luxuriant meads.
No trace of human creature met their eye,

Save one poor hut upon the desert shore,
Where dwelt a lonely man, and kept the ferry.
A tempest raged — the lake rose mountains high
And barred their further progress. Thereupon
They viewed the country; found it rich in wood,
Discovered goodly springs, and felt as they
Were in their own dear native land once more.
Then they resolved to settle on the spot;
Erected there the ancient town of Schwytz;
And many a day of toil had they to clear
The tangled brake and forest's spreading roots.
Meanwhile their numbers grew, the soil became
Unequal to sustain them, and they crossed
To the black mountain, far as Weissland, where,
Concealed behind eternal walls of ice,
Another people speak another tongue.
They built the village Stanz, beside the Kernwald:
The village Altdorf, in the vale of Reuss;
Yet, ever mindful of their parent stem,
The men of Schwytz, from all the stranger race,
That since that time have settled in the land,
Each other recognize. Their hearts still know,
And beat fraternally to kindred blood.

[*Extends his hand right and left.*

MAUER. Ay, we are all one heart, one blood, one race!

ALL (*joining hands*).
We are one people, and will act as one.

STAUFF. The nations round us bear a foreign yoke;
For they have yielded to the conqueror.
Nay, even within our frontiers may be found
Some that owe villein service to a lord,
A race of bonded serfs from sire to son.
But we, the genuine race of ancient Swiss,
Have kept our freedom from the first till now,
Never to princes have we bowed the knee;
Freely we sought protection of the empire.

ROSSEL. Freely we sought it — freely it was given.
'Tis so set down in Emperor Frederick's charter.

STAUFF. For the most free have still some feudal lord.
There must be still a chief, a judge supreme,

To whom appeal may lie in case of strife.
And therefore was it that our sires allowed
For what they had recovered from the waste,
This honor to the emperor, the lord
Of all the German and Italian soil;
And, like the other freemen of his realm,
Engaged to aid him with their swords in war;
And this alone should be the freeman's duty,
To guard the empire that keeps guard for him.

MELCH. He's but a slave that would acknowledge more.

STAUFF. They followed, when the Heribann * went forth,
The imperial standard, and they fought its battles!
To Italy they marched in arms, to place
The Cæsars' crown upon the emperor's head.
But still at home they ruled themselves in peace,
By their own laws and ancient usages.
The emperor's only right was to adjudge
The penalty of death; he therefore named
Some mighty noble as his delegate,
That had no stake or interest in the land.
He was called in, when doom was to be passed,
And, in the face of day, pronounced decree,
Clear and distinctly, fearing no man's hate.
What traces here, that we are bondsmen? Speak,
If there be any can gainsay my words!

HOFE. No! You have spoken but the simple truth;
We never stooped beneath a tyrant's yoke.

STAUFF. Even to the emperor we refused obedience,
When he gave judgment in the church's favor;
For when the Abbey of Einsiedlen claimed
The Alp our fathers and ourselves had grazed,
And showed an ancient charter, which bestowed
The land on them as being ownerless —
For our existence there had been concealed —
What was our answer? This: "The grant is void,
No emperor can bestow what is our own:

* The Heribann was a muster of warriors similar to the *arrière ban* in France.

And if the empire shall deny us justice,
We can, within our mountains, right ourselves!"
Thus spake our fathers! And shall we endure
The shame and infamy of this new yoke,
And from the vassal brook what never king
Dared in the fulness of his power attempt?
This soil we have created for ourselves,
By the hard labor of our hands; we've changed
The giant forest, that was erst the haunt
Of savage bears, into a home for man;
Extirpated the dragon's brood, that wont
To rise, distent with venom, from the swamps;
Rent the thick misty canopy that hung
Its blighting vapors on the dreary waste;
Blasted the solid rock; o'er the abyss
Thrown the firm bridge for the wayfaring man:
By the possession of a thousand years
The soil is ours. And shall an alien lord,
Himself a vassal, dare to venture here,
On our own hearths insult us, — and attempt
To forge the chains of bondage for our hands,
And do us shame on our own proper soil?
Is there no help against such wrong as this?
[*Great sensation among the people.*
Yes! there's a limit to the despot's power!
When the oppressed looks round in vain for justice,
When his sore burden may no more be borne,
With fearless heart he makes appeal to Heaven,
And thence brings down his everlasting rights,
Which there abide, inalienably his,
And indestructible as are the stars.
Nature's primeval state returns again,
Where man stands hostile to his fellow-man;
And if all other means shall fail his need,
One last resource remains — his own good sword
Our dearest treasures call to us for aid
Against the oppressor's violence; we stand
For country, home, for wives, for children here!

ALL (*clashing their swords*).

Here stand we for our homes, our wives, and children.

ROSSELMANN (*stepping into the circle*).
Bethink ye well before ye draw the sword.
Some peaceful compromise may yet be made;
Speak but one word, and at your feet you'll see
The men who now oppress you. Take the terms
That have been often tendered you; renounce
The empire, and to Austria swear allegiance!
MAUER. What says the priest? To Austria allegiance?
BUHEL. Hearken not to him!
WINKELRIED. 'Tis a traitor's counsel,
His country's foe!
REDING. Peace, peace, confederates!
SERVA. Homage to Austria, after wrongs like these!
FLUE. Shall Austria exort from us by force
What we denied to kindness and entreaty?
MEYER. Then should we all be slaves, deservedly.
MAUER. Yes! Let him forfeit all a Switzer's rights
Who talks of yielding to the yoke of Austria!
I stand on this, Landamman. Let this be
The foremost of our laws!
MELCHTHAL. Even so! Whoever
Shall talk of tamely bearing Austria's yoke,
Let him be stripped of all his rights and honors;
And no man hence receive him at his hearth!
ALL (*raising their right hands*).
Agreed! Be this the law!
REDING (*after a pause*). The law it is.
ROSSEL. Now you are free — by this law you are free.
Never shall Austria obtain by force
What she has failed to gain by friendly suit.
WEIL. On with the order of the day! Proceed!
REDING. Confederates! Have all gentler means been tried?
Perchance the emperor knows not of our wrongs,
It may not be his will that thus we suffer:
Were it not well to make one last attempt,
And lay our grievances before the throne,
Ere we unsheath the sword? Force is at best
A fearful thing even in a righteous cause;
God only helps when man can help no more.

STAUFF. (*to* CONRAD HUNN).
Here you can give us information. Speak!
HUNN. I was at Rheinfeld, at the emperor's palace,
Deputed by the Cantons to complain
Of the oppression of these governors,
And claim the charter of our ancient freedom,
Which each new king till now has ratified.
I found the envoys there of many a town,
From Suabia and the valley of the Rhine,
Who all received their parchments as they wished
And straight went home again with merry heart.
They sent for me, your envoy, to the council,
Where I was soon dismissed with empty comfort;
"The emperor at present was engaged;
Some other time he would attend to us!"
I turned away, and passing through the hall,
With heavy heart in a recess I saw
The Grand Duke John * in tears, and by his side
The noble lords of Wart and Tegerfeld,
Who beckoned me, and said, "Redress yourselves.
Expect not justice from the emperor.
Does he not plunder his own brother's child,
And keep from him his just inheritance?
The duke claims his maternal property,
Urging he's now of age, and 'tis full time
That he should rule his people and dominions;
What is the answer made to him? The king
Places a chaplet on his head: "Behold,
The fitting ornament," he cries, "of youth!"
MAUER. You hear. Expect not from the emperor
Or right, or justice. Then redress yourselves!
REDING. No other course is left us. Now, advise
What plan most likely to insure success.
FURST. To shake a thraldom off that we abhor,
To keep our ancient rights inviolate,
As we received them from our forefathers — this,
Not lawless innovation, is our aim.
Let Cæsar still retain what is his due;

* The Duke of Suabia, who soon afterwards assassinated his uncle, for withholding his patrimony from him.

And he that is a vassal let him pay
The service he is sworn to faithfully.

MEYER. I hold my land of Austria in fief.

FURST. Continue, then, to pay your feudal service.

WEIL. I'm tenant of the lords of Rappersweil.

FURST. Continue, then, to pay them rent and tithe.

ROSSEL. Of Zurich's lady, I'm the humble vassal.

FURST. Give to the cloister what the cloister claims.

STAUFF. The empire only is my feudal lord.

FURST. What needs must be, we'll do, but nothing further.
We'll drive these tyrants and their minions hence,
And raze their towering strongholds to the ground,
Yet shed, if possible, no drop of blood.
Let the emperor see that we were driven to cast
The sacred duties of respect away;
And when he finds we keep within our bounds,
His wrath, belike, may yield to policy;
For truly is that nation to be feared,
That, when in arms, is temperate in its wrath.

REDING. But, prithee, tell us how may this be done?
The enemy is armed as well as we,
And, rest assured, he will not yield in peace.

STAUFF. He will, whene'er he sees us up in arms;
We shall surprise him, ere he is prepared.

MEYER. 'Tis easily said, but not so easily done.
Two fortresses of strength command the country.
They shield the foe, and should the king invade us,
The task would then be dangerous indeed.
Rossberg and Sarnen both must be secured,
Before a sword is drawn in either Canton.

STAUFF. Should we delay, the foe will soon be warned;
We are too numerous for secrecy.

MEYER. There is no traitor in the Forest States.

ROSSEL. But even zeal may heedlessly betray.

FURST. Delay it longer, and the keep at Altdorf
Will be complete, — the governor secure.

MEYER. You think but of yourselves.

SACRISTAN. You are unjust!
MEYER. Unjust! said you? Dares Uri taunt us so?
REDING. Peace, on your oath!
MEYER. If Schwytz be leagued with Uri,
Why then, indeed, we must perforce be silent.
REDING. And let me tell you, in the Diet's name,
Your hasty spirit much disturbs the peace.
Stand we not all for the same common cause?
WINK. What, if we delay till Christmas? 'Tis then
The custom for the serfs to throng the castle,
Bringing the governor their annual gifts.
Thus may some ten or twelve selected men
Assemble unobserved within its walls,
Bearing about their persons pikes of steel,
Which may be quickly mounted upon staves,
For arms are not admitted to the fort.
The rest can fill the neighboring wood, prepared
To sally forth upon a trumpet's blast,
Whene'er their comrades have secured the gate;
And thus the castle will be ours with ease.
MELCH. The Rossberg I will undertake to scale,
I have a sweetheart in the garrison,
Whom with some tender words I could persuade
To lower me at night a hempen ladder.
Once up, my friends will not be long behind.
REDING. Are all resolved in favor of delay?
[*The majority raise their hands.*
STAUFF. (*counting them*).
Twenty to twelve is the majority.
FURST. If on the appointed day the castles fall,
From mountain on to mountain we shall pass
The fiery signal: in the capital
Of every Canton quickly rouse the Landsturm.*
Then, when these tyrants see our martial front,
Believe me, they will never make so bold
As risk the conflict, but will gladly take
Safe conduct forth beyond our boundaries.
STAUFF. Not so with Gessler. He will make a stand.
Surrounded with his dread array of horse,
Blood will be shed before he quits the field.

* A sort of national militia.

And even expelled he'd still be terrible.
'Tis hard, indeed 'tis dangerous, to spare **him.**

BAUM. Place me where'er a life is to be lost;
I owe my life to Tell, and cheerfully
Will pledge it for my country. I have cleared
My honor, and my heart is now at rest.

REDING. Counsel will come with circumstance. Be patient.
Something must still be trusted to the moment.
Yet, while by night we hold our Diet here,
The morning, see, has on the mountain-tops
Kindled her glowing beacon. Let us part,
Ere the broad sun surprise us.

FURST. Do not fear.
The night wanes slowly from these vales of ours.

[*All have involuntarily taken off their caps, and contemplate the breaking of day, absorbed in silence.*

ROSSEL. By this fair light, which greeteth us, before
Those other nations, that, beneath us far,
In noisomè cities pent, draw painful breath,
Swear we the oath of our confederacy!
We swear to be a nation of true brothers,
Never to part in danger or in death!

[*They repeat his words with three fingers raised.*

We swear we will be free, as were our sires,
And sooner die than live in slavery!

[*All repeat as before.*

We swear to put our trust in God Most High,
And not to quail before the might of man!

[*All repeat as before, and embrace each other.*

STAUFF. Now every man pursue his several way
Back to his friends his kindred, and his home.
Let the herd winter up his flock and gain
In silence, friends, for our confederacy!
What for a time must be endured, endure.
And let the reckoning of the tyrants grow,
Till the great day arrive, when they shall pay
The general and particular debt at once.
Let every man control his own just rage,
And nurse his vengeance for the public wrongs;

For he whom selfish interest now engage
Defrauds the general weal of what to it belongs.

[*As they are going off in profound silence, in three different directions, the orchestra plays a solemn air. The empty scene remains open for some time, showing the rays of the sun rising over the glaciers.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Court before TELL'S *house.* TELL *with an axe.* HEDWIG *engaged in her domestic duties.* WALTER *and* WILHELM *in the background playing with a little cross-bow.*

WALTER (*sings*).

With his cross-bow and his quiver
The huntsman speeds his way,
Over mountain, dale, and river
At the dawning of the day.

As the eagle, on wild pinion,
Is the king in realms of air;
So the hunter claims dominion
Over crag and forest lair.

Far as ever bow can carry
Through the trackless, airy space,
All he sees he makes his quarry,
Soaring bird and beast of chase.

WILHELM (*runs forward*).
My string has snapped! Wilt mend it for me, father?

TELL. Not I; a true-born archer helps himself.

[*Boys retire.*

HEDW. The boys begin to use the bow betimes.

TELL. 'Tis early practice only makes the master.

HEDW. Ah! Would to heaven they never learnt the art!

TELL. But they shall learn it, wife, in all its points.
Whoe'er would carve an independent way
Through life must learn to ward or plant a blow.

HEDW. Alas, alas! and they will never rest
Contentedly at home.
TELL. No more can I!
I was not framed by nature for a shepherd.
Restless I must pursue a changing course;
I only feel the flush and joy of life
In starting some fresh quarry every day.
HEDW. Heedless the while of all your wife's alarms
As she sits watching through long hours at home.
For my soul sinks with terror at the tales
The servants tell about your wild adventures.
Whene'er we part my trembling heart forebodes
That you will ne'er come back to me again.
I see you on the frozen mountain steeps,
Missing, perchance, your leap from cliff to cliff;
I see the chamois, with a wild rebound,
Drag you down with him o'er the precipice.
I see the avalanche close o'er your head,
The treacherous ice give way, and you sink down
Entombed alive within its hideous gulf.
Ah! in a hundred varying forms does death
Pursue the Alpine huntsman on his course.
That way of life can surely ne'er be blessed,
Where life and limb are perilled every hour.
TELL. The man that bears a quick and steady eye,
And trusts to God and his own lusty sinews,
Passes, with scarce a scar, through every danger.
The mountain cannot awe the mountain child.
[*Having finished his work, he lays aside his tools.*
And now, methinks, the door will hold awhile.
The axe at home oft saves the carpenter.
[*Takes his cap.*
HEDW. Whither away!
TELL. To Altdorf, to your father.
HEDW. You have some dangerous enterprise in view?
Confess!
TELL. Why think you so?
HEDWIG. Some scheme's on foot,
Against the governors. There was a Diet

Held on the Rootli — that I know — and you
Are one of the confederacy I'm sure.

TELL. I was not there. Yet will I not hold back
Whene'er my country calls me to her aid.

HEDW. Wherever danger is, will you be placed.
On you, as ever, will the burden fall.

TELL. Each man shall have the post that fits his powers.

HEDW. You took — ay, 'mid the thickest of the storm —
The man of Unterwald across the lake.
'Tis a marvel you escaped. Had you no thought
Of wife and children then?

TELL. Dear wife, I had;
And therefore saved the father for his children.

HEDW. To brave the lake in all its wrath; 'Twas not
To put your trust in God! 'Twas tempting him.

TELL. The man that's over-cautious will do little.

HEDW. Yes, you've a kind and helping hand for all;
But be in straits and who will lend you aid?

TELL. God grant I ne'er may stand in need of it!
[*Takes up his crossbow and arrows.*

HEDW. Why take your crossbow with you? Leave it here.

TELL. I want my right hand when I want my bow.
[*The boys return.*

WALT. Where, father, are you going?

TELL. To grand-dad, boy —
To Altdorf. Will you go?

WALTER. Ay, that I will!

HEDW. The viceroy's there just now. Go not to Altdorf.

TELL. He leaves to-day.

HEDWIG. Then let him first be gone,
Cross not his path. You know he bears us grudge.

TELL. His ill-will cannot greatly injure me.
I do what's right, and care for no man's hate.

HEDW. 'Tis those who do what's right whom he most hates.

TELL. Because he cannot reach them. Me, I ween,
His knightship will be glad to leave in peace.

HEDW. Ay. Are you sure of that?
TELL. Not long ago,
As I was hunting through the wild ravines
Of Shechenthal, untrod by mortal foot, —
There, as I took my solitary way
Along a shelving ledge of rocks, where 'twas
Impossible to step on either side;
For high above rose, like a giant wall,
The precipice's side, and far below
The Shechen thundered o'er its rifted bed; —
[*The boys press towards him, looking upon him with excited curiosity.*
— There, face to face, I met the viceroy. He
Alone with me — and I myself alone —
Mere man to man, and near us the abyss.
And when his lordship had perused my face,
And knew the man he had severely fined
On some most trivial ground not long before;
And saw me, with my sturdy bow in hand,
Come striding towards him, then his cheek grew pale,
His knees refused their office, and I thought
He would have sunk against the mountain side.
Then, touched with pity for him, I advanced,
Respectfully, and said, "'Tis I, my lord."
But ne'er a sound could he compel his lips
To frame an answer. Only with his hand
He beckoned me in silence to proceed.
So I passed on, and sent his train to seek him.
HEDW. He trembled then before you? Woe the while
You saw his weakness; that he'll not forgive.
TELL. I shun him, therefore, and he'll not seek me.
HEDW. But stay away to day. Go hunting rather!
TELL. What do you fear?
HEDWIG. I am uneasy. Stay.
TELL. Why thus distress yourself without a cause?
HEDW. Because there is no cause. Tell, Tell! stay here!
TELL. Dear wife, I gave my promise I would go.
HEDW. Must you, — then go. But leave the boys with me.
WALT. No, mother dear, I'm going with my father.

HEDW. How, Walter! Will you leave your mother then?

WALT. I'll bring you pretty things from grandpapa.
[*Exit with his father.*

WILH. Mother, I'll stay with you!

HEDWIG (*embracing him*). Yes, yes! thou art
My own dear child. Thou'rt all that's left to me.
[*She goes to the gate of the court, and looks anxiously after* TELL *and her son for a considerable time.*

SCENE II.

A retired part of the Forest. Brooks dashing in spray over the rocks.

Enter BERTHA *in a hunting dress. Immediately afterwards* RUDENZ.

BERTHA. He follows me. Now to explain myself!

RUDENZ (*entering hastily*).
At length, dear lady, we have met alone
In this wild dell, with rocks on every side,
No jealous eye can watch our interview.
Now let my heart throw off this weary silence.

BERTHA. But are you sure they will not follow us?

RUD. See, yonder goes the chase. Now, then, or never!
I must avail me of the precious moment, —
Must hear my doom decided by thy lips,
Though it should part me from thy side forever.
Oh, do not arm that gentle face of thine
With looks so stern and harsh! Who — who am I,
That dare aspire so high as unto thee?
Fame hath not stamped me yet; nor may I take
My place amid the courtly throng of knights,
That, crowned with glory's lustre, woo thy smiles.
Nothing have I to offer but a heart
That overflows with truth and love for thee.

BERTHA (*sternly and with severity*).
And dare you speak to me of love — of truth?

You, that are faithless to your nearest ties!
You, that are Austria's slave — bartered and sold
To her — an alien, and your country's tyrant!

RUD. How! This reproach from thee! Whom do I seek
On Austria's side, my own beloved, but thee?

BERTHA. Think you to find me in the traitor's ranks?
Now, as I live, I'd rather give my hand
To Gessler's self, all despot though he be,
Than to the Switzer who forgets his birth,
And stoops to be the minion of a tyrant.

RUD. Oh heaven, what must I hear!

BERTHA. Say! what can lie
Nearer the good man's heart than friends and kindred?
What dearer duty to a noble soul
Than to protect weak, suffering innocence,
And vindicate the rights of the oppressed?
My very soul bleeds for your countrymen;
I suffer with them, for I needs must love them;
They are so gentle, yet so full of power;
They draw my whole heart to them. Every day
I look upon them with increased esteem.
But you, whom nature and your knightly vow,
Have given them as their natural protector,
Yet who desert them and abet their foes,
In forging shackles for your native land,
You — you it is, that deeply grieve and wound me.
I must constrain my heart, or I shall hate you.

RUD. Is not my country's welfare all my wish?
What seek I for her but to purchase peace
'Neath Austria's potent sceptre?

BERTHA. Bondage, rather!
You would drive freedom from the last strong-hold
That yet remains for her upon the earth.
The people know their own true interests better:
Their simple natures are not warped by show,
But round your head a tangling net is wound.

RUD. Bertha, you hate me — you despise me!

BERTHA. Nay!
And if I did, 'twere better for my peace.
But to see him despised and despicable, —
The man whom one might love.
RUDENZ. Oh, Bertha! You
Show me the pinnacle of heavenly bliss,
Then, in a moment, hurl me to despair!
BERTH. No, no! the noble is not all extinct
Within you. It but slumbers, — I will rouse it.
It must have cost you many a fiery struggle
To crush the virtues of your race within you.
But, heaven be praised, 'tis mightier than yourself,
And you are noble in your own despite!
RUD. You trust me, then? Oh, Bertha, with thy love
What might I not become?
BERTHA. Be only that
For which your own high nature destined you.
Fill the position you were born to fill; —
Stand by your people and your native land.
And battle for your sacred rights!
RUDENZ. Alas!
How can I hope to win you — to possess you,
If I take arms against the emperor?
Will not your potent kinsman interpose,
To dictate the disposal of your hand?
BERTH. All my estates lie in the Forest Cantons;
And I am free, when Switzerland is free.
RUD. Oh! what a prospect, Bertha, hast thou shown me!
BERTH. Hope not to win my hand by Austria's favor;
Fain would they lay their grasp on my estates,
To swell the vast domains which now they hold.
The selfsame lust of conquest that would rob
You of your liberty endangers mine.
Oh, friend, I'm marked for sacrifice; — to be
The guerdon of some parasite, perchance!
They'll drag me hence to the imperial court
That hateful haunt of falsehood and intrigue;
There do detested marriage bonds await me.
Love, love alone, — your love can rescue me.

RUD. And thou could'st be content, love, to live here,
In my own native land to be my own?
Oh, Bertha, all the yearnings of my soul
For this great world and its tumultuous strife,
What were they, but a yearning after thee?
In glory's path I sought for thee alone,
And all my thirst of fame was only love.
But if in this calm vale thou canst abide
With me, and bid earth's pomps and pride adieu,
Then is the goal of my ambition won;
And the rough tide of the tempestuous world
May dash and rave around these firm-set hills!
No wandering wishes more have I to send
Forth to the busy scene that stirs beyond.
Then may these rocks that girdle us extend
Their giants walls impenetrably round,
And this sequestered happy vale alone
Look up to heaven, and be my paradise!

BERTH. Now art thou all my fancy dreamed of thee.
My trust has not been given to thee in vain.

RUD. Away, ye idle phantoms of my folly!
In mine own home I'll find my happiness.
Here where the gladsome boy to manhood grew,
Where every brook, and tree, and mountain peak,
Teems with remembrances of happy hours,
In mine own native land thou wilt be mine.
Ah, I have ever loved it well, I feel
How poor without it were all earthly joys.

BERTH. Where should we look for happiness on earth,
If not in this dear land of innocence?
Here, where old truth hath its familiar home,
Where fraud and guile are strangers, envy ne'er
Shall dim the sparkling fountain of our bliss,
And ever bright the hours shall o'er us glide.
There do I see thee, in true manly worth,
The foremost of the free and of thy peers,
Revered with homage pure and unconstrained,
Wielding a power that kings might envy thee.

RUD. And thee I see, thy sex's crowning gem,
With thy sweet woman grace and wakeful love,

Building a heaven for me within my home,
And, as the springtime scatters forth her flowers,
Adorning with thy charms my path of life,
And spreading joy and sunshine all around.

BERTH. And this it was, dear friend, that caused my grief,
To see thee blast this life's supremest bliss,
With thine own hand. Ah! what had been my fate,
Had I been forced to follow some proud lord,
Some ruthless despot, to his gloomy castle!
Here are no castles, here no bastioned walls
Divide me from a people I can bless.

RUD. Yet, how to free myself; to loose the coils
Which I have madly twined around my head?

BERTH. Tear them asunder with a man's resolve.
Whatever the event, stand by the people.
It is thy post by birth.

[*Hunting horns are heard in the distance.*

But hark! The chase!
Farewell, — 'tis needful we should part — away!
Fight for thy land; thou fightest for thy love.
One foe fills all our souls with dread; the blow
That makes one free emancipates us all.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.

A meadow near Altdorf. Trees in the foreground. At the back of the stage a cap upon a pole. The prospect is bounded by the Bannberg, which is surmounted by a snow-capped mountain.

FRIESHARDT *and* LEUTHOLD *on guard.*

FRIESS. We keep our watch in vain. There's not a soul
Will pass and do obeisance to the cap.
But yesterday the place swarmed like a fair;
Now the whole green looks like a very desert,
Since yonder scarecrow hung upon the pole.

LEUTH. Only the vilest rabble show themselves,
And wave their tattered caps in mockery at us.
All honest citizens would sooner make
A tedious circuit over half the town
Than bend their backs before our master's cap.

FRIESS. They were obliged to pass this way at noon,
As they were coming from the council house.
I counted then upon a famous catch,
For no one thought of bowing to the cap.
But Rosselmann, the priest, was even with me:
Coming just then from some sick penitent,
He stands before the pole — raises the Host —
The Sacrist, too, must tinkle with his bell —
When down they dropped on knee — myself and all
In reverence to the Host, but not the cap.

LEUTH. Hark ye, companion, I've a shrewd suspicion,
Our post's no better than the pillory.
It is a burning shame, a trooper should
Stand sentinel before an empty cap,
And every honest fellow must despise us,
To do obeisance to a cap, too! Faith,
I never heard an order so absurd!

FRIESS. Why not, an't please thee, to an empty cap.
Thou'st ducked, I'm sure, to many an empty sconce.

[HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD, *and* ELSBETH *enter with their children and station themselves around the pole.*

LEUTH. And thou art an officious sneaking knave,
That's fond of bringing honest folks to trouble.
For my part, he that likes may pass the cap:
I'll shut my eyes and take no note of him.

MECH. There hangs the viceroy! Your obeisance, children!

ELS. I would to God he'd go, and leave his cap!
The country would be none the worse for it.

FRIESSHARDT (*driving them away*).
Out of the way! Confounded pack of gossips!
Who sent for you? Go, send your husbands here,
If they have courage to defy the order.

[TELL *enters with his crossbow, leading his son* WALTER *by the hand. They pass the hat without noticing it, and advance to the front of the stage.*

WALTER (*pointing to the Bannberg*).
Father, is't true, that on the mountain there,
The trees, if wounded with a hatchet, bleed?
TELL. Who says so, boy?
WALTER. The master herdsman, father!
He tells us there's a charm upon the trees,
And if a man shall injure them, the hand
That struck the blow will grow from out the grave.
TELL. There is a charm about them, that's the truth.
Dost see those glaciers yonder, those white horns,
That seem to melt away into the sky?
WALT. They are the peaks that thunder so at night,
And send the avalanches down upon us.
TELL. They are; and Altdorf long ago had been
Submerged beneath these avalanches' weight,
Did not the forest there above the town
Stand like a bulwark to arrest their fall.
WALTER (*after musing a little*).
And are there countries with no mountains, father?
TELL. Yes, if we travel downwards from our heights,
And keep descending in the rivers' courses,
We reach a wide and level country, where
Our mountain torrents brawl and foam no more,
And fair, large rivers glide serenely on.
All quarters of the heaven may there be scanned
Without impediment. The corn grows there
In broad and lovely fields, and all the land
Is fair as any garden to the view.
WALT. But, father, tell me, wherefore haste we not
Away to this delightful land, instead
Of toiling here, and struggling as we do?
TELL. The land is fair and bountiful as Heaven;
But they who till it never may enjoy
The fruits of what they sow.
WALTER. Live they not free,
As you do, on the land their fathers left them?
TELL. The fields are all the bishop's or the king's.
WALT. But they may freely hunt among the woods?
TELL. The game is all the monarch's — bird and beast.

WALT. But they, at least, may surely fish the streams?
TELL. Stream, lake, and sea, all to the king belong.
WALT. Who is this king, of whom they're so afraid?
TELL. He is the man who fosters and protects them.
WALT. Have they not courage to protect themselves?
TELL. The neighbor there dare not his neighbor trust.
WALT. I should want breathing room in such a land,
I'd rather dwell beneath the avalanches.
TELL. 'Tis better, child, to have these glacier peaks
Behind one's back than evil-minded men!
[*They are about to pass on.*
WALT. See, father, see the cap on yonder pole!
TELL. What is the cap to us? Come, let's be gone.
[*As he is going,* FRIESSHARDT, *presenting his pike, stops him.*
FRIESS. Stand, I command you, in the emperor's name.
TELL (*seizing the pike*).
What would ye? Wherefore do ye stop my path?
FRIESS. You've broke the mandate, and must go with us.
LEUTH. You have not done obeisance to the cap.
TELL. Friend, let me go.
FRIESS. Away, away to prison!
WALT. Father to prison! Help!
[*Calling to the side scene.*
This way, you men!
Good people, help! They're dragging him to prison!
[ROSSELMANN, *the priest, and the* SACRISTAN, *with three other men, enter.*
SACRIS. What's here amiss?
ROSS. Why do you seize this man?
FRIESS. He is an enemy of the king — a traitor!
TELL (*seizing him with violence*).
A traitor, I!
ROSSELMANN. Friend, thou art wrong. 'Tis Tell,
An honest man, and worthy citizen.
WALTER (*descries* FURST, *and runs up to him*).
Grandfather, help! they want to seize my father!
FRIESS. Away to prison!
FURST (*running in*). Stay! I offer bail.
For God's sake, Tell, what is the matter here?
[MELCHTHAL *and* STAUFFACHER *enter.*

LEUTH. He has contemned the viceroy's sovereign power,
Refusing flatly to acknowledge it.
STAUFF. Has Tell done this?
MELCHTHAL. Villain, thou knowest 'tis false!
LEUTH. He has not made obeisance to the cap.
FURST. And shall for this to prison? Come, my friend,
Take my security, and let him go.
FRIESS. Keep your security for yourself — you'll need it.
We only do our duty. Hence with him.
MELCHTHAL (*to the country people*).
This is too bad—shall we stand by, and see them.
Drag him away before our very eyes?
SACRIS. We are the strongest. Don't endure it, friends.
Our countrymen will back us to a man.
FRIESS. Who dares resist the governor's commands?
OTHER THREE PEASANTS (*running in*).
We'll help you. What's the matter? Down
with them!
[HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD, *and* ELSBETH *return.*
TELL. Go, go, good people, I can help myself.
Think you, had I a mind to use my strength,
These pikes of theirs should daunt me?
MELCHTHAL (*to* FRIESSHARDT). Only try —
Try, if you dare, to force him from amongst us.
FURST *and* STAUFFACHER.
Peace, peace, friends!
FRIESSHARDT (*loudly*). Riot! Insurrection, ho!
[*Hunting horns without.*
WOMEN. The governor!
FRIESSHARDT (*raising his voice*). Rebellion! Mutiny!
STAUFF. Roar, till you burst, knave!
ROSSELMANN *and* MELCHTHAL. Will you hold your
tongue?
FRIESSHARDT (*calling still louder*).
Help, help, I say, the servants of the law!
FURST. The viceroy here! Then we shall smart for this!
[*Enter* GESSLER *on horseback, with a falcon on his wrist;* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, BERTHA, *and* RUDENZ, *and a numerous train of armed attendants, who form a circle of lances around the whole stage.*

HAR. Room for the viceroy!
GESSLER. Drive the clowns apart.
Why throng the people thus? Who calls for help? [*General silence.*
Who was it? I will know.
[FRIESSHARDT *steps forward.*
And who art thou?
And why hast thou this man in custody?
[*Gives his falcon to an attendant.*
FRIESS. Dread sir, I am a soldier of your guard,
And stationed sentinel beside the cap;
This man I apprehended in the act
Of passing it without obeisance due,
So I arrested him, as you gave order,
Whereon the people tried to rescue him.
GESSLER (*after a pause*).
And do you, Tell, so lightly hold your king,
And me, who act as his vicegerent here,
That you refuse the greeting to the cap
I hung aloft to test your loyalty?
I read in this a disaffected spirit.
TELL. Pardon me, good my lord! The action sprung
From inadvertence, — not from disrespect.
Were I discreet, I were not William Tell.
Forgive me now — I'll not offend again.
GESSLER (*after a pause*).
I hear, Tell, you're a master with the bow, —
And bear the palm away from every rival.
WALT. That must be true, sir! At a hundred yards
He'll shoot an apple for you off the tree.
GESSL. Is that boy thine, Tell?
TELL. Yes, my gracious lord.
GESSL. Hast any more of them?
TELL. Two boys, my lord.
GESSL. And, of the two, which dost thou love the most?
TELL. Sir, both the boys are dear to me alike.
GESSL. Then, Tell, since at a hundred yards thou canst
Bring down the apple from the tree, thou shalt
Approve thy skill before me. Take thy bow —
Thou hast it there at hand — and make thee ready

To shoot an apple from the stripling's head!
But take this counsel, — look well to thine aim,
See that thou hittest the apple at the first,
For, shouldst thou miss, thy head shall pay the forfeit. [*All give signs of horror.*

TELL. What monstrous thing, my lord, is this you ask?
That I, from the head of mine own child! — No, no!
It cannot be, kind sir, you meant not that —
God in His grace forbid! You could not ask
A father seriously to do that thing!

GESSL. Thou art to shoot an apple from his head!
I do desire — command it so.

TELL. What, I!
Level my crossbow at the darling head
Of mine own child? No — rather let me die!

GESSL. Or thou must shoot, or with thee dies the boy.

TELL. Shall I become the murderer of my child!
You have no children, sir — you do not know
The tender throbbings of a father's heart.

GESSL. How now, Tell, so discreet upon a sudden
I had been told thou wert a visionary, —
A wanderer from the paths of common men.
Thou lovest the marvellous. So have I now
Culled out for thee a task of special daring.
Another man might pause and hesitate;
Thou dashest at it, heart and soul, at once.

BERTH. Oh, do not jest, my lord, with these poor souls!
See, how they tremble, and how pale they look,
So little used are they to hear thee jest.

GESSL. Who tells thee that I jest?
[*Grasping a branch above his head.*
Here is the apple.
Room there, I say! And let him take his distance —
Just eighty paces — as the custom is —
Not an inch more or less! It was his boast,
That at a hundred he could hit his man.
Now, archer, to your task, and look you miss not!

HAR. Heavens! this grows serious — down, boy, on your knees,
And beg the governor to spare your life.

FURST. (*aside to* MELCHTHAL, *who can scarcely restrain his impatience*).
Command yourself — be calm, I beg of you!
BERTHA (*to the governor*).
Let this suffice you, sir! It is inhuman
To trifle with a father's anguish thus.
Although this wretched man had forfeited
Both life and limb for such a slight offence,
Already has he suffered tenfold death.
Send him away uninjured to his home;
He'll know thee well in future; and this hour
He and his children's children will remember.
GESSL. Open a way there — quick! Why this delay?
Thy life is forfeited; I might despatch thee,
And see I graciously repose thy fate
Upon the skill of thine own practised hand.
No cause has he to say his doom his harsh,
Who's made the master of his destiny.
Thou boastest of thy steady eye. 'Tis well!
Now is a fitting time to show thy skill.
The mark is worthy, and the prize is great.
To hit the bull's-eye in the target; that
Can many another do as well as thou;
But he, methinks, is master of his craft
Who can at all times on his skill rely,
Nor lets his heart disturb or eye or hand.
FURST. My lord, we bow to your authority;
But, oh, let justice yield to mercy here.
Take half my property, nay, take it all,
But spare a father this unnatural doom!
WALT. Grandfather, do not kneel to that bad man!
Say, where am I to stand? I do not fear;
My father strikes the bird upon the wing,
And will not miss now when 'twould harm his boy!
STAUFF. Does the child's innocence not touch your heart?
ROSSEL. Bethink you, sir, there is a God in heaven,
To whom you must account for all your deeds.
GESSLER (*pointing to the boy*).
Bind him to yonder lime tree straight!

WALTER. Bind me?
No, I will not be bound! I will be still,
Still as a lamb — nor even draw my breath!
But if you bind me I cannot be still.
Then I shall writhe and struggle with my bonds.
HAR. But let your eyes at least be bandaged, boy!
WALT. And why my eyes? No! Do you think I fear
An arrow from my father's hand? Not I!
I'll wait it firmly, nor so much as wink!
Quick, father, show them that thou art an archer!
He doubts thy skill — he thinks to ruin us.
Shoot then and hit though but to spite the tyrant!
[*He goes to the lime tree, and an apple is placed on his head.*
MELCHTHAL (*to the country people*).
What! Is this outrage to be perpetrated
Before our very eyes? Where is our oath?
STAUFF. 'Tis all in vain. We have no weapons here;
And see the wood of lances that surrounds us!
MELCH. Oh! would to heaven that we had struck at once!
God pardon those who counselled the delay!
GESSLER (*to* TELL).
Now, to thy task! Men bear not arms for naught.
'Tis dangerous to carry deadly weapons,
And on the archer oft his shaft recoils.
This right these haughty peasant-churls assume
Trenches upon their master's privileges.
None should be armed but those who bear command.
It pleases you wear the bow and bolt;
Well, be it so. I will provide the mark.
TELL (*bends the bow and fixes the arrow*).
A lane there! Room!
STAUFFACHER. What, Tell? You would — no, no!
You shake — your hand's unsteady — your knees tremble!
TELL (*letting the bow sink down*).
There's something swims before mine eyes!

WOMEN. Great Heaven!

TELL. Release me from this shot! Here is my heart!
[*Tears open his breast.*
Summon your troopers — let them strike me down!

GESSL. I do not want thy life, Tell, but the shot.
Thy talent's universal! Nothing daunts thee!
Thou canst direct the rudder like the bow!
Storms fright not thee when there's a life at stake.
Now, savior, help thyself, — thou savest all!
[TELL *stands fearfully agitated by contending emotions, his hands moving convulsively, and his eyes turning alternately to the governor and heaven. Suddenly he takes a second arrow from his quiver and sticks it in his belt. The governor watches all these motions.*

WALTER (*beneath the lime tree*).
Come, father, shoot! I'm not afraid!

TELL. It must be!
[*Collects himself and levels the bow.*

RUDENZ (*who all the while has been standing in a state of violent excitement, and has with difficulty restrained himself, advances*).
My lord, you will not urge this matter further.
You will not. It was surely but a test.
You've gained your object. Rigor pushed too far
Is sure to miss its aim, however good,
As snaps the bow that's all too straightly bent.

GESSL. Peace, till your counsel's asked for!

RUDENZ. I will speak!
Ay, and I dare! I reverence my king;
But acts like these must make his name abhorred.
He sanctions not this cruelty. I dare
Avouch the fact. And you outstep your powers
In handling thus an unoffending people.

GESSL. Ha! thou growest bold methinks!

RUDENZ. I have been dumb
To all the oppressions I was doomed to see.

I've closed mine eyes that they might not behold
them,
Bade my rebellious, swelling heart be still,
And pent its struggles down within my breast.
But to be silent longer were to be
A traitor to my king and country both.

BERTHA (*casting herself between him and the governor*).
Oh, heavens! you but exasperate his rage!

RUD. My people I forsook, renounced my kindred —
Broke all the ties of nature that I might
Attach myself to you. I madly thought
That I should best advance the general weal,
By adding sinews to the emperor's power.
The scales have fallen from mine eyes — I see
The fearful precipice on which I stand.
You've led my youthful judgment far astray, —
Deceived my honest heart. With best intent,
I had well nigh achieved my country's ruin.

GESSL. Audacious boy, this language to thy lord?

RUD. The emperor is my lord, not you! I'm free
As you by birth, and I can cope with you
In every virtue that beseems a knight.
And if you stood not here in that king's name,
Which I respect e'en where 'tis most abused,
I'd throw my gauntlet down, and you should give
An answer to my gage in knightly fashion.
Ay, beckon to your troopers! Here I stand;
But not like these [*Pointing to the people.*
— unarmed. I have a sword,
And he that stirs one step ——

STAUFFACHER (*exclaims*). The apple's down!

[*While the attention of the crowd has been directed to the spot where* BERTHA *had cast herself between* RUDENZ *and* GESSLER, TELL *has shot.*

ROSSEL. The boy's alive!

MANY VOICES. The apple has been struck!

[WALTER FURST *staggers, and is about to fall.* BERTHA *supports him.*

GESSLER (*astonished*).
How? Has he shot? The madman!

BERTHA. Worthy father!
Pray you compose yourself. The boy's alive!
WALTER (*runs in with the apple*).
Here is the apple, father! Well I knew
You would not harm your boy.
[TELL *stands with his body bent forwards, as though he would follow the arrow. His bow drops from his hand. When he sees the boy advancing, he hastens to meet him with open arms, and embracing him passionately sinks down with him quite exhausted. All crowd round them deeply affected.*
BERTHA. Oh, ye kind heavens!
FURST (*to father and son*). My children, my dear children!
STAUFFACHER. God be praised!
LEUTH. Almighty powers! That was a shot indeed!
It will be talked of to the end of time.
HAR. This feat of Tell, the archer, will be told
While yonder mountains stand upon their base.
[*Hands the apple to* GESSLER.
GESSL. By heaven! the apple's cleft right through the core.
It was a master shot I must allow.
ROSSEL. The shot was good. But woe to him who drove
The man to tempt his God by such a feat!
STAUFF. Cheer up, Tell, rise! You've nobly freed yourself,
And now may go in quiet to your home.
ROSSEL. Come, to the mother let us bear her son!
[*They are about to lead him off.*
GESSL. A word, Tell.
TELL. Sir, your pleasure?
GESSLER. Thou didst place
A second arrow in thy belt — nay, nay!
I saw it well — what was thy purpose with it?
TELL (*confused*). It is the custom with all archers, sir.
GESSL. No, Tell, I cannot let that answer pass.
There was some other motive, well I know.
Frankly and cheerfully confess the truth; —

Whate'er it be I promise thee thy life,
Wherefore the second arrow?

TELL. Well, my lord,
Since you have promised not to take my life,
I will, without reserve, declare the truth.
[*He draws the arrow from his belt, and fixes his eyes sternly upon the governor.*
If that my hand had struck my darling child,
This second arrow I had aimed at you,
And, be assured, I should not then have missed.

GESSL. Well, Tell, I promised thou shouldst have thy life;
I gave my knightly word, and I will keep it.
Yet, as I know the malice of thy thoughts,
I will remove thee hence to sure confinement,
Where neither sun nor moon shall reach thine eyes,
Thus from thy arrows I shall be secure.
Seize on him, guards, and bind him.
[*They bind him.*

STAUFFACHER. How, my lord —
How can you treat in such a way a man
On whom God's hand has plainly been revealed?

GESSL. Well, let us see if it will save him twice!
Remove him to my ship; I'll follow straight.
In person I will see him lodged at Küssnacht.

ROSSEL. You dare not do it. Nor durst the emperor's self,
So violate our dearest chartered rights.

GESSL. Where are they? Has the emperor confirmed them?
He never has. And only by obedience
Need you expect to win that favor from him.
You are all rebels 'gainst the emperor's power —
And bear a desperate and rebellious spirit.
I know you all — I see you through and through.
Him do I single from amongst you now,
But in his guilt you all participate.
The wise will study silence and obedience.
[*Exit, followed by* BERTHA, RUDENZ, HARRAS, *and attendants.* FRIESSHARDT *and* LEUTHOLD *remain.*

FURST (*in violent anguish*).
All's over now! He is resolved to bring
Destruction on myself and all my house.
STAUFF. (*to* TELL). Oh, why did you provoke the tyrant's rage?
TELL. Let him be calm who feels the pangs I felt.
STAUFF. Alas! Alas! Our hope is gone.
With you we all are fettered and enchained.
COUNTRY PEOPLE (*surrounding* TELL).
Our last remaining comfort goes with you!
LEUTH. (*approaching him*).
I'm sorry for you, Tell, but must obey.
TELL. Farewell!
WALTER TELL (*clinging to him in great agony*).
Oh, father, father, my dear father!
TELL (*pointing to heaven*).
Thy father is on high — appeal to him!
STAUFF. Hast thou no message, Tell, to send thy wife?
TELL (*clasping the boy passionately to his breast*).
The boy's uninjured; God will succor me!
[*Tears himself suddenly away, and follows the soldiers of the guard.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Eastern shore of the lake of Lucerne; rugged and singularly shaped rocks close the prospect to the west. The lake is agitated, violent roaring and rushing of wind, with thunder and lightning at intervals.

KUNZ OF GERSAU, FISHERMAN, *and* BOY.

KUNZ. I saw it with these eyes! Believe me, friend,
It happened all precisely as I've said.
FISHER. Tell, made a prisoner and borne off to Küssnacht?
The best man in the land, the bravest arm,
Had we resolved to strike for liberty!
KUNZ. The viceroy takes him up the lake in person:
They were about to go on board as I
Left Flüelen; but still the gathering storm

FISHE

KUNZ.

FISHER.

KUNZ. T

FISHER. Tell
Now
Thro
sil
The eye
The arm t
chains!

BOY. 'Tis hailing h
This is no weat

FISHER. Rage on, ye wind
fires!
Burst, ye swollen
heaven,
Descend, and drown t
Destroy the generations
Ye savage elements, be l
Return, ye bears; ye anci
To this wide, howling wast
Who would live here whe

BOY. Hark! How the wind wh
pool roars;
I never saw a storm so fierce

FISHER. To level at the head of his own child!
Never had father such command before.

arvel,
d bow

ice,
o thaw,
away;
al cliffs,
whelm
les!
Bells heard.
ain yonder!
ess,
for it.
cends a rock.
its course,
tossed waves.
ught avail;
a ball,
s. Far or near,
y shelter!
, the sheer, smooth

n his despair,
ir flinty breasts.

earing down from Flüelen.
or wretches! When the storm
in this strait of ours,
e savage beast of prey,
nst its cage's iron bars.
ks an outlet — all in vain;
s hedge it round on every side,
narrow pass as high as heaven.
[*He ascends a cliff.*
vernor of Uri's ship;
poop I know it, and the flag.
of Heaven! Yes, it is he himself.
overnor! Yonder he sails,
And with him bears the burden of his crimes!
Soon has the arm of the avenger found him;

Now over him he knows a mightier lord.
These waves yield no obedience to his voice,
These rocks bow not their heads before his cap.
Boy, do not pray; stay not the Judge's arm!

BOY. I pray not for the governor; I pray
For Tell, who is on board the ship with him.

FISHER. Alas, ye blind, unreasoning elements!
Must ye, in punishing one guilty head,
Destroy the vessel and the pilot too?

BOY. See, see, they've cleared the Buggisgrat;* but now
The blast, rebounding from the Devil's Minster,*
Has driven them back on the Great Axenberg.*
I cannot see them now.

FISHERMAN. The Hakmesser*
Is there, that's foundered many a gallant ship.
If they should fail to double that with skill,
Their bark will go to pieces on the rocks
That hide their jagged peaks below the lake.
They have on board the very best of pilots;
If any man can save them, Tell is he;
But he is manacled, both hand and foot.

[*Enter* WILLIAM TELL, *with his crossbow. He enters precipitately, looks wildly round, and testifies the most violent agitation. When he reaches the centre of the stage, he throws himself upon his knees, and stretches out his hands, first towards the earth, then towards heaven.*

BOY (*observing him*).
See, father! Who is that man, kneeling yonder?

FISHER. He clutches at the earth with both his hands,
And looks as though he were beside himself.

BOY (*advancing*).
What do I see? Father, come here, and look!

FISHERMAN (*approaches*).
Who is it? God in heaven! What! William Tell,
How came you hither? Speak, Tell!

BOY. Were you not
In yonder ship, a prisoner, and in chains?

* Rocks on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne.

FISHER. Were they not bearing you away to Küssnacht?
TELL (*rising*). I am released.
FISHERMAN *and* BOY. Released, oh miracle!
BOY. Whence came you here?
TELL. From yonder vessel!
FISHERMAN. What?
BOY. Where is the viceroy?
TELL. Drifting on the waves.
FISHER. Is't possible? But you! How are you here?
How 'scaped you from your fetters and the storm?
TELL. By God's most gracious providence. Attend.
FISHER *and* BOY. Say on, say on!
TELL. You know what passed at Altdorf?
FISHER. I do — say on!
TELL. How I was seized and bound,
And ordered by the governor to Küssnacht.
FISHER. And how with you at Flüelen he embarked.
All this we know. Say, how have you escaped?
TELL. I lay on deck, fast bound with cords, disarmed,
In utter hopelessness. I did not think
Again to see the gladsome light of day,
Nor the dear faces of my wife and children;
And eyed disconsolate the waste of waters——
FISHER. Oh, wretched man!
TELL. Then we put forth; the viceroy,
Rudolph der Harras, and their suite. My bow
And quiver lay astern beside the helm;
And just as we had reached the corner, near
The Little Axen,* heaven ordained it so,
That from the Gotthardt's gorge, a hurricane
Swept down upon us with such headlong force,
That every rower's heart within him sank,
And all on board looked for a watery grave.
Then heard I one of the attendant train,
Turning to Gessler, in this strain accost him:
"You see our danger, and your own, my lord
And that we hover on the verge of death.
The boatmen there are powerless from fear,
Nor are they confident what course to take;

* A rock on the shore of the lake of Lucerne.

Now, here is Tell, a stout and fearless man,
And knows to steer with more than common skill.
How if we should avail ourselves of him
In this emergency?" The viceroy then
Addressed me thus: "If thou wilt undertake
To bring us through this tempest safely, Tell,
I might consent to free thee from thy bonds."
I answered, "Yes, my lord, with God's assistance,
I'll see what can be done, and help us heaven!"
On this they loosed me from my bonds, and I
Stood by the helm and fairly steered along;
Yet ever eyed my shooting-gear askance,
And kept a watchful eye upon the shore,
To find some point where I might leap to land:
And when I had descried a shelving crag,
That jutted, smooth atop, into the lake ——

FISHER. I know it. 'Tis at foot of the Great Axen;
But looks so steep, I never could have dreamed
'Twere possible to leap it from the boat.

TELL. I bade the men put forth their utmost might,
Until we came before the shelving crag.
For there, I said, the danger will be past!
Stoutly they pulled, and soon we neared the point;
One prayer to God for his assisting grace,
And straining every muscle, I brought round
The vessel's stern close to the rocky wall;
Then snatching up my weapons, with a bound
I swung myself upon the flattened shelf,
And with my feet thrust off, with all my might,
The puny bark into the hell of waters.
There let it drift about, as heaven ordains!
Thus am I here, delivered from the might
Of the dread storm, and man, more dreadful still.

FISHER. Tell, Tell, the Lord has manifestly wrought
A miracle in thy behalf! I scarce
Can credit my own eyes. But tell me, now,
Whither you purpose to betake yourself?

For you will be in peril should the viceroy
Chance to escape this tempest with his life.

TELL. I heard him say, as I lay bound on board,
His purpose was to disembark at Brunnen;
And, crossing Schwytz, convey me to his castle.

FISHER. Means he to go by land?

TELL. So he intends.

FISHER. Oh, then, conceal yourself without delay!
Not twice will heaven release you from his grasp.

TELL. Which is the nearest way to Arth and Küssnacht?

FISHER. The public road leads by the way of Steinen,
But there's a nearer road, and more retired,
That goes by Lowerz, which my boy can show you.

TELL (*gives him his hand*).
May heaven reward your kindness! Fare ye well!

[*As he is going he comes back.*
Did not you also take the oath at Rootli?
I heard your name, methinks.

FISHERMAN. Yes, I was there,
And took the oath of the confederacy;

TELL. Then do me this one favor; speed to Bürglen —
My wife is anxious at my absence — tell her
That I am free, and in secure concealment.

FISHER. But whither shall I tell her you have fled?

TELL. You'll find her father with her, and some more,
Who took the oath with you upon the Rootli;
Bid them be resolute, and strong of heart, —
For Tell is free and master of his arm;
They shall hear further news of me ere long.

FISHER. What have you, then, in view? Come, tell me frankly!

TELL. When once 'tis done 'twill be in every mouth.

[*Exit.*

FISHER. Show him the way, boy. Heaven be his support!
Whate'er he has resolved, he'll execute.

[*Exit.*

Scene II.

Baronial mansion of Attinghausen. The Baron *upon a couch dying.* Walter Furst, Stauffacher, Melchthal, *and* Baumgarten *attending round him.* Walter Tell *kneeling before the dying man.*

Furst. All now is over with him. He is gone.
Stauff. He lies not like one dead. The feather, see,
Moves on his lips! His sleep is very calm,
And on his features plays a placid smile.
[Baumgarten *goes to the door and speaks with some one.*
Furst. Who's there?
Baugmarten (*returning*).
Tell's wife, your daughter; she insists
That she must speak with you, and see her boy.
[Walter Tell *rises.*
Furst. I who need comfort — can I comfort her?
Does every sorrow centre on my head?
Hedwig (*forcing her way in*).
Where is my child? Unhand me! I must see him.
Stauff. Be calm! Reflect you're in the house of death!
Hedwig (*falling upon her boy's neck*).
My Walter! Oh, he yet is mine!
Walter. Dear mother!
Hedw. And is it surely so? Art thou unhurt?
[*Gazing at him with anxious tenderness.*
And is it possible he aimed at thee?
How could he do it? Oh, he has no heart —
And he could wing an arrow at his child!
Furst. His soul was racked with anguish when he did it.
No choice was left him, but to shoot or die!
Hedw. Oh, if he had a father's heart, he would
Have sooner perished by a thousand deaths!
Stauff. You should be grateful for God's gracious care,
That ordered things so well.
Hedwig. Can I forget
What might have been the issue. God of heaven!
Were I to live for centuries, I still

Should see my boy tied up, — his father's mark, —
And still the shaft would quiver in my heart!

MELCH. You know not how the viceroy taunted him!

HEDW. Oh, ruthless heart of man! Offend his pride,
And reason in his breast forsakes her seat;
In his blind wrath he'll stake upon a cast
A child's existence, and a mother's heart!

BAUM. Is then your husband's fate not hard enough,
That you embitter it by such reproaches?
Have you no feeling for his sufferings?

HEDWIG (*turning to him and gazing full upon him*).
Hast thou tears only for thy friend's distress?
Say, where were you when he — my noble Tell,
Was bound in chains? Where was your friendship, then?
The shameful wrong was done before your eyes;
Patient you stood, and let your friend be dragged,
Ay, from your very hands. Did ever Tell
Act thus to you? Did he stand whining by
When on your heels the viceroy's horsemen pressed,
And full before you roared the storm-tossed lake?
Oh, not with idle tears he showed his pity;
Into the boat he sprung, forgot his home,
His wife, his children, and delivered thee!

FURST. It had been madness to attempt his rescue,
Unarmed, and few in numbers as we were.

HEDWIG (*casting herself upon his bosom*).
Oh, father, and thou, too, hast lost my Tell!
The country — all have lost him! All lament
His loss; and, oh, how he must pine for us!
Heaven keep his soul from sinking to despair!
No friend's consoling voice can penetrate
His dreary dungeon walls. Should he fall sick
Ah! In the vapors of the murky vault
He must fall sick. Even as the Alpine rose
Grows pale and withers in the swampy air,
There is no life for him, but in the sun,
And in the balm of heaven's refreshing breeze.
Imprisoned? Liberty to him is breath;
He cannot live in the rank dungeon air!

STAUFF. Pray you be calm! And, hand in hand, we'll all
Combine to burst his prison doors.
HEDWIG. Without him,
What have you power to do? While Tell was free,
There still, indeed, was hope — weak innocence
Had still a friend, and the oppressed a stay.
Tell saved you all! You cannot all combined
Release him from his cruel prison bonds.
[*The* BARON *wakes.*
BAUM. Hush, hush! He starts!
ATTINGHAUSEN (*sitting up*). Where is he?
STAUFFACHER. Who?
ATTINGHAUSEN. He leaves me, —
In my last moments he abandons me.
STAUFF. He means his nephew. Have they sent for him?
FURST. He has been summoned. Cheerily, sir! Take comfort!
He has found his heart at last, and is our own.
ATTING. Say, has he spoken for his native land?
STAUFF. Ay, like a hero!
ATTINGHAUSEN. Wherefore comes he not,
That he may take my blessing ere I die?
I feel my life fast ebbing to a close.
STAUFF. Nay, talk not thus, dear sir! This last short sleep
Has much refreshed you, and your eye is bright.
ATTING. Life is but pain, and even that has left me;
My sufferings, like my hopes, have passed away.
[*Observing the boy.*
What boy is that?
FURST. Bless him. Oh, good my lord!
He is my grandson, and is fatherless.
[HEDWIG *kneels with the boy before the dying man.*
ATTING. And fatherless — I leave you all, ay, all!
Oh, wretched fate, that these old eyes should see
My country's ruin, as they close in death.
Must I attain the utmost verge of life,
To feel my hopes go with me to the grave.

STAUFFACHER (*to* FURST).
Shall he depart 'mid grief and gloom like this?
Shall not his parting moments be illumed
By hope's delightful beams? My noble lord,
Raise up your drooping spirit! We are not
Forsaken quite — past all deliverance.
ATTING. Who shall deliver you?
FURST. Ourselves. For know
The Cantons three are to each other pledged
To hunt the tyrants from the land. The league
Has been concluded, and a sacred oath
Confirms our union. Ere another year
Begins its circling course — the blow shall fall.
In a free land your ashes shall repose.
ATTING. The league concluded! Is it really so?
MELCH. On one day shall the Cantons rise together.
All is prepared to strike — and to this hour
The secret closely kept though hundreds share it;
The ground is hollow 'neath the tyrant's feet;
Their days of rule are numbered, and ere long
No trace of their dominion shall remain.
ATTING. Ay, but their castles, how to master them?
MELCH. On the same day they, too, are doomed to fall.
ATTING. And are the nobles parties to this league?
STAUFF. We trust to their assistance should we need it;
As yet the peasantry alone have sworn.
ATTING. (*raising himself up in great astonishment*).
And have the peasantry dared such a deed
On their own charge without their nobles' aid —
Relied so much on their own proper strength?
Nay then, indeed, they want our help no more;
We may go down to death cheered by the thought
That after us the majesty of man
Will live, and be maintained by other hands.
[*He lays his hand upon the head of the child, who is kneeling before him.*
From this boy's head, whereon the apple lay,
Your new and better liberty shall spring;

The old is crumbling down — the times are changing —
And from the ruins blooms a fairer life.

STAUFFACHER (*to* FURST).

See, see, what splendor streams around his eye!
This is not nature's last expiring flame,
It is the beam of renovated life.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

From their old towers the nobles are descending,
And swearing in the towns the civic oath.
In Uechtland and Thurgau the work's begun;
The noble Bern lifts her commanding head,
And Freyburg is a stronghold of the free;
The stirring Zurich calls her guilds to arms;
And now, behold! the ancient might of kings
Is shivered against her everlasting walls.

[*He speaks what follows with a prophetic tone; his utterance rising into enthusiasm.*

I see the princes and their haughty peers,
Clad all in steel, come striding on to crush
A harmless shepherd race with mailed hand.
Desperate the conflict: 'tis for life or death;
And many a pass will tell to after years
Of glorious victories sealed in foemen's blood.*
The peasant throws himself with naked breast,
A willing victim on their serried lances.
They yield — the flower of chivalry's cut down,
And freedom waves her conquering banner high!

[*Grasps the hands of* WALTER FURST *and* STAUFFACHER.

Hold fast together, then — forever fast!
Let freedom's haunts be one in heart and mind!
Set watches on your mountain-tops, that league

* An allusion to the gallant self-devotion of Arnold Struthan of Winkelried, at the battle of Sempach (9th July, 1386), who broke the Austrian phalanx by rushing on their lances, grasping as many of them as he could reach, and concentrating them upon his breast. The confederates rushed forward through the gap thus opened by the sacrifice of their comrade, broke and cut down their enemy's ranks, and soon became the masters of the field. "Dear and faithful confederates, I will open you a passage. Protect my wife and children," were the words of Winkelried as he rushed to death.

May answer league, when comes the hour to strike.
Be one — be one — be one ——

[*He falls back upon the cushion. His lifeless hands continue to grasp those of* Furst *and* Stauffacher, *who regard him for some moments in silence, and then retire, overcome with sorrow. Meanwhile the servants have quietly pressed into the chamber, testifying different degrees of grief. Some kneel down beside him and weep on his body: while this scene is passing the castle bell tolls.*

Rudenz (*entering hurriedly*).
Lives he? Oh, say, can he still hear my voice?

Furst (*averting his face*).
You are our seignior and protector now;
Henceforth this castle bears another name.

Rudenz (*gazing at the body with deep emotion*).
Oh, God! Is my repentance, then, too late?
Could he not live some few brief moments more,
To see the change that has come o'er my heart?
Oh, I was deaf to his true counselling voice
While yet he walked on earth. Now he is gone;
Gone and forever, — leaving me the debt, —
The heavy debt I owe him — undischarged!
Oh, tell me! did he part in anger with me?

Stauff. When dying he was told what you had done,
And blessed the valor that inspired your words!

Rudenz (*kneeling down beside the dead body*).
Yes, sacred relics of a man beloved!
Thou lifeless corpse! Here, on thy death-cold hand,
Do I abjure all foreign ties forever!
And to my country's cause devote myself.
I am a Switzer, and will act as one
With my whole heart and soul. [*Rises.*
Mourn for our friend,
Our common parent, yet be not dismayed!
'Tis not alone his lands that I inherit, —
His heart — his spirit have devolved on me;

And my young arm shall execute the task
For which his hoary age remained your debtor.
Give me your hands, ye venerable fathers!
Thine, Melchthal, too! Nay, do not hesitate,
Nor from me turn distrustfully away.
Accept my plighted vow — my knightly oath!

FURST. Give him your hands, my friends! A heart like his
That sees and owns its error claims our trust.

MELCH. You ever held the peasantry in scorn;
What surety have we that you mean us fair?

RUD. Oh, think not of the error of my youth!

STAUFFACHER (*to* MELCHTHAL).
Be one! They were our father's latest words.
See they be not forgotten!

MELCH. Take my hand, —
A peasant's hand, — and with it, noble sir,
The gage and the assurance of a man!
Without us, sir, what would the nobles be?
Our order is more ancient, too, than yours!

RUD. I honor it, and with my sword will shield it!

MELCH. The arm, my lord, that tames the stubborn earth,
And makes its bosom blossom with increase,
Can also shield a man's defenceless breast.

RUD. Then you shall shield my breast and I will yours;
Thus each be strengthened by the others' aid!
Yet wherefore talk we while our native land
Is still to alien tyranny a prey?
First let us sweep the foeman from the soil,
Then reconcile our difference in peace!
[*After a moment's pause.*
How! You are silent! Not a word for me?
And have I yet no title to your trust?
Then must I force my way, despite your will,
Into the league you secretly have formed.
You've held a Diet on the Rootli, — I
Know this, — know all that was transacted there!
And though I was not trusted with your secret,
I still have kept it like a sacred pledge.

Trust me, I never was my country's foe,
Nor would I ever have ranged myself against you!
Yet you did wrong to put your rising off.
Time presses! We must strike, and swiftly, too!
Already Tell has fallen a sacrifice
To your delay.

STAUFF. We swore to wait till Christmas.

RUD. I was not there, — I did not take the oath.
If you delay I will not!

MELCHTHAL. What! You would ——

RUD. I count me now among the country's fathers,
And to protect you is my foremost duty.

FURST. Within the earth to lay these dear remains,
That is your nearest and most sacred duty.

RUD. When we have set the country free, we'll place
Our fresh, victorious wreaths upon his bier.
Oh, my dear friends, 'tis not your cause alone!
I have a cause to battle with the tyrants
That more concerns myself. Know, that my Bertha
Has disappeared, — been carried off by stealth,
Stolen from amongst us by their ruffian hands!

STAUFF. And has the tyrant dared so fell an outrage
Against a lady free and nobly born?

RUD. Alas! my friends, I promised help to you,
And I must first implore it for myself?
She that I love is stolen — is forced away,
And who knows where the tyrant has concealed her.
Or with what outrages his ruffian crew
May force her into nuptials she detests?
Forsake me not! Oh help me to her rescue!
She loves you! Well, oh well, has she deserved
That all should rush to arms in her behalf.

STAUFF. What course do you propose?

RUDENZ. Alas! I know not.
In the dark mystery that shrouds her fate,
In the dread agony of this suspense,
Where I can grasp at naught of certainty,

One single ray of comfort beams upon me.
From out the ruins of the tyrant's power
Alone can she be rescued from the grave.
Their strongholds must be levelled! Every one,
Ere we can pierce into her gloomy prison.

MELCH. Come, lead us on! We follow! Why defer
Until to-morrow what to-day may do?
Tell's arm was free when we at Rootli swore,
This foul enormity was yet undone.
And change of circumstance brings change of law.
Who such a coward as to waver still?

RUDENZ (*to* WALTER FURST).
Meanwhile to arms, and wait in readiness
The fiery signal on the mountain-tops.
For swifter than a boat can scour the lake
Shall you have tidings of our victory;
And when you see the welcome flames ascend,
Then, like the lightning, swoop upon the foe,
And lay the despots and their creatures low!

SCENE III.

The pass near Küssnacht, sloping down from behind, with rocks on either side. The travellers are visible upon the heights, before they appear on the stage. Rocks all round the stage. Upon one of the foremost a projecting cliff overgrown with brushwood.

TELL (*enters with his crossbow*).
Here through this deep defile he needs must pass;
There leads no other road to Küssnacht; here
I'll do it; the opportunity is good.
Yon alder tree stands well for my concealment,
Thence my avenging shaft will surely reach him.
The straitness of the path forbids pursuit.
Now, Gessler, balance thine account with Heaven!
Thou must away from earth, thy sand is run.

I led a peaceful, inoffensive life;
My bow was bent on forest game alone,
And my pure soul was free from thoughts of murder.
But thou hast scared me from my dream of peace;
The milk of human kindness thou hast turned

To rankling poison in my breast, and made
Appalling deeds familiar to my soul.
He who could make his own child's head his mark
Can speed his arrow to his foeman's heart.

My children dear, my loved and faithful wife,
Must be protected, tyrant, from thy fury!
When last I drew my bow, with trembling hand,
And thou, with murderous joy, a father forced
To level at his child; when, all in vain,
Writhing before thee, I implored thy mercy,
Then in the agony of my soul I vowed
A fearful oath, which met God's ear alone,
That when my bow next winged an arrow's flight
Its aim should be thy heart. The vow I made
Amid the hellish torments of that moment
I hold a sacred debt, and I will pay it.

Thou art my lord, my emperor's delegate,
Yet would the emperor not have stretched his power
So far as thou. He sent thee to these Cantons
To deal forth law, stern law, for he is angered;
But not to wanton with unbridled will
In every cruelty, with fiendlike joy:
There is a God to punish and avenge.

Come forth, thou bringer once of bitter pangs,
My precious jewel now, my chiefest treasure;
A mark I'll set thee, which the cry of grief
Could never penetrate, but thou shalt pierce it.
And thou, my trusty bowstring, that so oft
Has served me faithfully in sportive scenes,
Desert me not in this most serious hour —
Only be true this once, my own good cord,
That has so often winged the biting shaft: —
For shouldst thou fly successless from my hand,
I have no second to send after thee.
[*Travellers pass over the stage.*
I'll sit me down upon this bench of stone,
Hewn for the wayworn traveller's brief repose —
For here there is no home. Each hurries by

The other, with quick step and careless look,
Nor stays to question of his grief. Here goes
The merchant, full of care — the pilgrim next,
With slender scrip — and then the pious monk,
The scowling robber, and the jovial player,
The carrier with his heavy-laden horse,
That comes to us from the far haunts of men;
For every road conducts to the world's end.
They all push onwards — every man intent
On his own several business — mine is murder.
[*Sits down.*
Time, was, my dearest children, when with joy
You hailed your father's safe return to home
From his long mountain toils; for when he came
He ever brought some little present with him.
A lovely Alpine flower — a curious bird —
Or elf-boat found by wanderers on the hills.
But now he goes in quest of other game:
In the wild pass he sits, and broods on murder;
And watches for the life-blood of his foe,
But still his thoughts are fixed on you alone,
Dear children. 'Tis to guard your innocence,
To shield you from the tyrant's fell revenge,
He bends his bow to do a deed of blood!
[*Rises.*
Well — I am watching for a noble prey —
Does not the huntsman, with severest toil,
Roam for whole days amid the winter's cold,
Leap with a daring bound from rock to rock, —
And climb the jagged, slippery steeps, to which
His limbs are glued by his own streaming blood;
And all this but to gain a wretched chamois.
A far more precious prize is now my aim —
The heart of that dire foe who would destroy me.
[*Sprightly music heard in the distance, which comes gradually nearer.*
From my first years of boyhood I have used
The bow — been practised in the archer's feats;
The bull's-eye many a time my shafts have hit,
And many a goodly prize have I brought home,
Won in the games of skill. This day I'll make

My master-shot, and win the highest prize
Within the whole circumference of the mountains.

[*A marriage train passes over the stage, and goes up the pass.* TELL *gazes at it, leaning on his bow. He is joined by* STUSSI, *the Ranger.*

STUSSI. There goes the bridal party of the steward
Of Mörlischachen's cloister. He is rich!
And has some ten good pastures on the Alps.
He goes to fetch his bride from Imisee,
There will be revelry to-night at Küssnacht.
Come with us — every honest man's invited.

TELL. A gloomy guest fits not a wedding feast.

STUSSI. If grief oppress you, dash it from your heart!
Bear with your lot. The times are heavy now,
And we must snatch at pleasure while we can.
Here 'tis a bridal, there a burial.

TELL. And oft the one treads close upon the other.

STUSSI. So runs the world at present. Everywhere
We meet with woe and misery enough.
There's been a slide of earth in Glarus, and
A whole side of the Glärnisch has fallen in.

TELL. Strange! And do even the hills begin to totter?
There is stability for naught on earth.

STUSSI. Strange tidings, too, we hear from other parts.
I spoke with one but now, that came from Baden,
Who said a knight was on his way to court,
And as he rode along a swarm of wasps
Surrounded him, and settling on his horse,
So fiercely stung the beast that it fell dead,
And he proceeded to the court on foot.

TELL. Even the weak are furnished with a sting.

ARMGART (*enters with several children, and places herself at the entrance of the pass*).

STUSSI. 'Tis thought to bode disaster to the country, —
Some horrid deed against the course of nature.

TELL. Why, every day brings forth such fearful deeds;
There needs no miracle to tell their coming.

STUSSI. Too true! He's blessed who tills his field in peace,
And sits untroubled by his own fireside.

TELL. The very meekest cannot rest in quiet,
Unless it suits with his ill neighbor's humor.
[TELL *looks frequently with restless expectation towards the top of the pass.*
STUSSI. So fare you well! You're waiting some one here?
TELL. I am.
STUSSI. A pleasant meeting with your friends!
You are from Uri, are you not? His grace
The governor's expected thence to-day.
TRAVELLER (*entering*).
Look not to see the governor to-day.
The streams are flooded by the heavy rains,
And all the bridges have been swept away.
[TELL *rises.*
ARMGART (*coming forward*).
The viceroy not arrived?
STUSSI. And do you seek him?
ARM. Alas, I do!
STUSSI. But why thus place yourself
Where you obstruct his passage down the pass?
ARM. Here he cannot escape me. He must hear me.
FRIESS. (*coming hastily down the pass, and calls upon the stage*).
Make way, make way! My lord, the governor,
Is coming down on horseback close behind me.
[*Exit* TELL.
ARMGART (*with animation*).
The viceroy comes!
[*She goes towards the pass with her children.*
GESSLER *and* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS *appear upon the heights on horseback.*
STUSSI (*to* FRIESSHARDT). How got ye through the stream
When all the bridges have been carried down?
FRIESS. We've battled with the billows; and, my friend,
An Alpine torrent's nothing after that.
STUSSI. How! Were you out, then, in that dreadful storm?
FRIESS. Ay, that we were! I shall not soon forget it.
STUSSI. Stay, speak——

FRIESS. I cannot. I must to the castle,
And tell them that the governor's at hand.
[*Exit.*

STUSSI. If honest men, now, had been in the ship,
It had gone down with every soul on board: —
Some folks are proof 'gainst fire and water both. [*Looking round.*
Where has the huntsman gone with whom I spoke? [*Exit.*

Enter GESSLER *and* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS *on horseback.*

GESSL. Say what you please; I am the emperor's servant,
And my first care must be to do his pleasure.
He did not send me here to fawn and cringe
And coax these boors into good humor. No!
Obedience he must have. We soon shall see
If king or peasant is to lord it here?

ARM. Now is the moment! Now for my petition!

GESSL. 'Twas not in sport that I set up the cap
In Altdorf — or to try the people's hearts —
All this I knew before. I set it up
That they might learn to bend those stubborn necks
They carry far too proudly — and I placed
What well I knew their eyes could never brook
Full in the road, which they perforce must pass,
That, when their eyes fell on it, they might call
That lord to mind whom they too much forget.

HAR. But surely, sir, the people have some rights —

GESSL. This is no time to settle what they are.
Great projects are at work, and hatching now;
The imperial house seeks to extend its power.
Those vast designs of conquests, which the sire
Has gloriously begun, the son will end.
This petty nation is a stumbling-block —
One way or other it must be subjected.
[*They are about to pass on.* ARMGART *throws herself down before* GESSLER.

ARM. Mercy, lord governor! Oh, pardon, pardon!

GESSL. Why do you cross me on the public road?
Stand back, I say.
ARMGART. My husband lies in prison;
My wretched orphans cry for bread. Have pity,
Pity, my lord, upon our sore distress!
HAR. Who are you, woman; and who is your husband?
ARM. A poor wild-hay-man of the Rigiberg,
Kind sir, who on the brow of the abyss,
Mows down the grass from steep and craggy shelves,
To which the very cattle dare not climb.
HARRAS (*to* GESSLER).
By Heaven! a sad and miserable life!
I prithee, give the wretched man his freedom.
How great soever his offence may be,
His horrid trade is punishment enough.
[*To* ARMGART.
You shall have justice. To the castle bring
Your suit. This is no place to deal with it.
ARM. No, no, I will not stir from where I stand,
Until your grace restore my husband to me.
Six months already has he been in prison,
And waits the sentence of a judge in vain.
GESSL. How! would you force me, woman? Hence! Begone!
ARM. Justice, my lord! Ay, justice! Thou art judge!
The deputy of the emperor — of Heaven!
Then do thy duty, as thou hopest for justice
From Him who rules above, show it to us!
GESSL. Hence! drive this daring rabble from my sight!
ARMGART (*seizing his horse's reins*).
No, no, by Heaven, I've nothing more to lose.
Thou stirrest not, viceroy, from this spot until
Thou dost me fullest justice. Knit thy brows,
And roll thy eyes; I fear not. Our distress
Is so extreme, so boundless, that we care
No longer for thine anger.
GESSLER. Woman, hence!
Give way, I say, or I will ride thee down.

ARM. Well, do so; there!

[*Throws her children and herself upon the ground before him.*

Here on the ground I lie,
I and my children. Let the wretched orphans
Be trodden by thy horse into the dust!
It will not be the worst that thou hast done.

HAR. Are you mad, woman?

ARMGART (*continuing with vehemence*).

Many a day thou hast
Trampled the emperor's lands beneath thy feet.
Oh, I am but a woman! Were I man,
I'd find some better thing to do, than here
Lie grovelling in the dust.

[*The music of the wedding party is again heard from the top of the pass, but more softly.*

GESSLER. Where are my knaves?
Drag her away, lest I forget myself,
And do some deed I may repent hereafter.

HAR. My lord, the servants cannot force a passage;
The pass is blocked up by a marriage party.

GESSL. Too mild a ruler am I to this people,
Their tongues are all too bold; nor have they yet
Been tamed to due submission, as they shall be.
I must take order for the remedy;
I will subdue this stubborn mood of theirs,
And crush the soul of liberty within them.
I'll publish a new law throughout the land;
I will——

[*An arrow pierces him, — he puts his hand on his heart, and is about to sink — with a feeble voice.*

Oh God, have mercy on my soul!

HAR. My lord! my lord! Oh God! What's this?
Whence came it?

ARMGART (*starts up*).

Dead, dead! He reels, he falls! 'Tis in his heart!

HARRAS (*springs from his horse*).

This is most horrible! Oh Heavens! sir knight,

Address yourself to God and pray for mercy;
You are a dying man.

GESSLER. That shot was Tell's.

[*He slides from his horse into the arms of* RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, *who lays him down upon the bench.* TELL *appears above, upon the rocks.*

TELL. Thou knowest the archer, seek no other hand.
Our cottages are free, and innocence
Secure from thee: thou'lt be our curse no more.

[TELL *disappears. People rush in.*

STUSSI. What is the matter? Tell me what has happened?

ARM. The governor is shot,—killed by an arrow!

PEOPLE (*running in*).
Who has been shot?

[*While the foremost of the marriage party are coming on the stage, the hindmost are still upon the heights. The music continues.*

HARRAS. He's bleeding fast to death.
Away, for help—pursue the murderer!
Unhappy man, is't thus that thou must die?
Thou wouldst not heed the warnings that I gave thee!

STUSSI. By heaven, his cheek is pale! His life ebbs fast.

MANY VOICES.
Who did the deed?

HARRAS. What! Are the people mad
That they make music to a murder? Silence!

[*Music breaks off suddenly. People continue to flock in.*

Speak, if thou canst, my lord. Hast thou no charge
To intrust me with?

[GESSLER *makes signs with his hand, which he repeats with vehemence, when he finds they are not understood.*

What would you have me do?
Shall I to Küssnacht? I can't guess your meaning.

Do not give way to this impatience. Leave
All thoughts of earth and make your peace with Heaven.

[*The whole marriage party gather round the dying man.*

STUSSI. See there! how pale he grows! Death's gathering now
About his heart; his eyes grow dim and glazed.

ARMGART (*holds up a child*).
Look, children, how a tyrant dies!

HARRAS. Mad hag!
Have you no touch of feeling that you look
On horrors such as these without a shudder?
Help me—take hold. What, will not one assist
To pull the torturing arrow from his breast?

WOMEN. We touch the man whom God's own hand has struck!

HAR. All curses light on you! [*Draws his sword.*

STUSSI (*seizes his arm*). Gently, sir knight!
Your power is at an end. 'Twere best forbear.
Our country's foe is fallen. We will brook
No further violence. We are free men.

ALL. The country's free!

HARRAS. And is it come to this?
Fear and obedience at an end so soon?

[*To the soldiers of the guard who are thronging in.*

You see, my friends, the bloody piece of work
They've acted here. 'Tis now too late for help,
And to pursue the murderer were vain.
New duties claim our care. Set on to Küssnacht,
And let us save that fortress for the king!
For in an hour like this all ties of order,
Fealty, and faith are scattered to the winds.
No man's fidelity is to be trusted.

[*As he is going out with the soldiers six* FRATRES MISERICORDIÆ *appear.*

ARM. Here come the brotherhood of mercy. Room!

STUSSI. The victim's slain, and now the ravens stoop.

BROTHERS OF MERCY (*form a semicircle round the body, and sing in solemn tones*).

With hasty step death presses on,
Nor grants to man a moment's stay,
He falls ere half his race be run
In manhood's pride is swept away!
Prepared or unprepared to die,
He stands before his Judge on high.

[*While they are repeating the last two lines, the curtain falls.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A common near Altdorf. In the background to the right the keep of Uri, with the scaffold still standing, as in the third scene of the first act. To the left the view opens upon numerous mountains, on all of which signal fires are burning. Day is breaking, and bells are heard ringing from various distances.

RUODI, KUONI, WERNI, MASTER MASON, *and many other country people, also women and children.*

RUODI. Look at the fiery signals on the mountains!
MASON. Hark to the bells above the forest there!
RUODI. The enemy's expelled.
MASON. The forts are taken.
RUODI. And we of Uri, do we still endure
Upon our native soil the tyrant's keep?
Are we the last to strike for liberty?
MASON. Shall the yoke stand that was to bow our necks?
Up! Tear it to the ground!
ALL. Down, down with it!
RUODI. Where is the Stier of Uri?
URI. Here. What would ye?
RUODI. Up to your tower, and wind us such a blast,
As shall resound afar, from hill to hill;
Rousing the echoes of each peak and glen,
And call the mountain men in haste together!

[*Exit* STIER OF URI — *enter* WALTER FURST.

FURST. Stay, stay, my friends! As yet we have not learned
What has been done in Unterwald and Schwytz.
Let's wait till we receive intelligence!
RUODI. Wait, wait for what? The accursed tyrant's dead,
And the bright day of liberty has dawned!
MASON. How! Do these flaming signals not suffice,
That blaze on every mountain top around?
RUODI. Come all, fall to — come, men and women, all!
Destroy the scaffold! Tear the arches down!
Down with the walls; let not a stone remain.
MASON. Come, comrades, come! We built it, and we know
How best to hurl it down.
ALL. Come! Down with it!
[*They fall upon the building at every side.*
FURST. The floodgate's burst. They're not to be restrained.
[*Enter* MELCHTHAL *and* BAUMGARTEN.
MELCH. What! Stands the fortress still, when Sarnen lies
In ashes, and when Rossberg is a ruin?
FURST. You, Melchthal, here? D'ye bring us liberty?
Say, have you freed the country of the foe?
MELCH. We've swept them from the soil. Rejoice, my friend;
Now, at this very moment, while we speak,
There's not a tyrant left in Switzerland!
FURST. How did you get the forts into your power?
MELCH. Rudenz it was who with a gallant arm,
And manly daring, took the keep at Sarnen.
The Rossberg I had stormed the night before.
But hear what chanced. Scarce had we driven the foe
Forth from the keep, and given it to the flames,
That now rose crackling upwards to the skies,
When from the blaze rushed Diethelm, Gessler's page,
Exclaiming, "Lady Bertha will be burnt!"
FURST. Good heavens!
[*The beams of the scaffold are heard falling.*

MELCH. 'Twas she herself. Here had she been
Immured in secret by the viceroy's orders.
Rudenz sprang up in frenzy. For we heard
The beams and massive pillars crashing down,
And through the volumed smoke the piteous shrieks
Of the unhappy lady.

FURST. Is she saved?

MELCH. Here was a time for promptness and decision!
Had he been nothing but our baron, then
We should have been most chary of our lives;
But he was our confederate, and Bertha
Honored the people. So without a thought,
We risked the worst, and rushed into the flames.

FURST. But is she saved?

MELCH. She is. Rudenz and I
Bore her between us from the blazing pile,
With crashing timbers toppling all around.
And when she had revived, the danger past,
And raised her eyes to meet the light of heaven,
The baron fell upon my breast; and then
A silent vow of friendship passed between us——
A vow that, tempered in yon furnace heat,
Will last through every shock of time and fate.

FURST. Where is the Landenberg?

MELCH. Across the Brünig.
No fault of mine it was, that he, who quenched
My father's eyesight, should go hence unharmed.
He fled — I followed — overtook and seized him,
And dragged him to my father's feet. The sword
Already quivered o'er the caitiff's head,
When at the entreaty of the blind old man,
I spared the life for which he basely prayed.
He swore *Urphede*,* never to return:
He'll keep his oath, for he has felt our arm.

FURST. Thank God, our victory's unstained by blood!

* The Urphede was an oath of peculiar force. When a man who was at feud with another, invaded his lands and was worsted, he often made terms with his enemy by swearing the Urphede, by which he bound himself to depart and never to return with a hostile intention.

CHILDREN (*running across the stage with fragments of wood*).
Liberty! Liberty! Hurrah, we're free!
FURST. Oh! what a joyous scene! These children will,
E'en to their latest day, remember it.
[*Girls bring in the cap upon a pole. The whole stage is filled with people.*
RUODI. Here is the cap, to which we were to bow!
BAUM. Command us, how we shall dispose of it.
FURST. Heavens! 'Twas beneath this cap my grandson stood!
SEVERAL VOICES.
Destroy the emblem of the tyrant's power!
Let it burn!
FURST. No. Rather be preserved!
'Twas once the instrument of despots — now
'Twill be a lasting symbol of our freedom.
[*Peasants, men, women, and children, some standing, others sitting upon the beams of the shattered scaffold, all picturesquely grouped, in a large semicircle.*
MELCH. Thus now, my friends, with light and merry hearts,
We stand upon the wreck of tyranny;
And gallantly have we fulfilled the oath,
Which we at Rootli swore, confederates!
FURST. The work is but begun. We must be firm.
For, be assured, the king will make all speed,
To avenge his viceroy's death, and reinstate,
By force of arms, the tyrant we've expelled.
MELCH. Why, let him come, with all his armaments!
The foe within has fled before our arms;
We'll give him welcome warmly from without!
RUODI. The passes to the country are but few;
And these we'll boldly cover with our bodies.
BAUM. We are bound by an indissoluble league,
And all his armies shall not make us quail.
[*Enter* ROSSELMANN *and* STAUFFACHER.
ROSSELMANN (*speaking as he enters*).
These are the awful judgments of the lord!
PEAS. What is the matter?

ROSSELMANN. In what times we live!
FURST. Say on, what is't? Ha, Werner, is it you? What tidings?
PEASANT. What's the matter?
ROSSELMANN. Hear and wonder
STAUFF. We are released from one great cause of dread.
ROSSEL The emperor is murdered.
FURST. Gracious heaven!
[PEASANTS *rise up and throng round* STAUFFACHER.
ALL. Murdered! the emperor? What! The emperor! Hear!
MELCH. Impossible! How came you by the news?
STAUFF. 'Tis true! Near Bruck, by the assassin's hand, King Albert fell. A most trustworthy man, John Müller, from Schaffhausen, brought the news.
FURST. Who dared commit so horrible a deed?
STAUFF. The doer makes the deed more dreadful still; It was his nephew, his own brother's child, Duke John of Austria, who struck the blow.
MELCH. What drove him to so dire a parricide?
STAUFF. The emperor kept his patrimony back, Despite his urgent importunities; 'Twas said, indeed, he never meant to give it, But with a mitre to appease the duke. However this may be, the duke gave ear, To the ill counsel of his friends in arms; And with the noble lords, Von Eschenbach, Von Tegerfeld, Von Wart, and Palm, resolved, Since his demands for justice were despised, With his own hands to take revenge at least.
FURST. But say, how compassed he the dreadful deed?
STAUFF. The king was riding down from Stein to Baden, Upon his way to join the court at Rheinfeld, — With him a train of high-born gentlemen, And the young princes, John and Leopold. And when they reached the ferry of the Reuss, The assassins forced their way into the boat, To separate the emperor from his suite. His highness landed, and was riding on

Across a fresh-ploughed field — where once, they say,
A mighty city stood in Pagan times —
With Hapsburg's ancient turrets full in sight,
Where all the grandeur of his line had birth —
When Duke John plunged a dagger in his throat,
Palm ran him through the body with his lance,
Eschenbach cleft his skull at one fell blow,
And down he sank, all weltering in his blood,
On his own soil, by his own kinsmen slain.
Those on the opposite bank, who saw the deed,
Being parted by the stream, could only raise
An unavailing cry of loud lament.
But a poor woman, sitting by the way,
Raised him, and on her breast he bled to death.

MELCH. Thus has he dug his own untimely grave,
Who sought insatiably to grasp at all.

STAUFF. The country round is filled with dire alarm.
The mountain passes are blockaded all,
And sentinels on every frontier set ;
E'en ancient Zurich barricades her gates,
That for these thirty years have open stood,
Dreading the murderers, and the avengers more,
For cruel Agnes comes, the Hungarian queen,
To all her sex's tenderness a stranger,
Armed with the thunders of the church to wreak
Dire vengeance for her parent's royal blood,
On the whole race of those that murdered him, —
Upon their servants, children, children's children, —
Nay' on the stones that build their castle walls.
Deep has she sworn a vow to immolate
Whole generations on her father's tomb,
And bathe in blood as in the dew of May.

MELCH. Know you which way the murderers have fled?

STAUFF. No sooner had they done the deed than they
Took flight, each following a different route,
And parted, ne'er to see each other more.

Duke John must still be wandering in the mountains.

FURST. And thus their crime has yielded them no fruits.
Revenge is barren. Of itself it makes
The dreadful food it feeds on; its delight
Is murder — its satiety despair.

STAUFF. The assassins reap no profit by their crime;
But we shall pluck with unpolluted hands
The teeming fruits of their most bloody deed,
For we are ransomed from our heaviest fear;
The direst foe of liberty has fallen,
And, 'tis reported, that the crown will pass
From Hapsburg's house into another line.
The empire is determined to assert
Its old prerogative of choice, I hear.

FURST *and several others.*
Has any one been named to you?

STAUFFACHER. The Count
Of Luxembourg is widely named already.

FURST. T'is well we stood so stanchly by the empire!
Now we may hope for justice, and with cause.

STAUFF. The emperor will need some valiant friends,
And he will shelter us from Austria's vengeance.

[*The peasantry embrace. Enter* SACRIST, *with imperial messenger.*

SACRIST. Here are the worthy chiefs of Switzerland!

ROSSELMANN *and several others.*
Sacrist, what news?

SACRISTAN. A courier brings this letter.

ALL (*to* WALTER FURST).
Open and read it.

FURST (*reading*). "To the worthy men
Of Uri, Schwytz, and Unterwald, the Queen
Elizabeth sends grace and all good wishes!"

MANY VOICES.
What wants the queen with us? Her reign is done.

FURST (*reads*).
"In the great grief and doleful widowhood,
In which the bloody exit of her lord
Has plunged her majesty, she still remembers
The ancient faith and love of Switzerland."

MELCH. She ne'er did that in her prosperity.
ROSSEL. Hush, let us hear.
FURST (*reads*). "And she is well assured,
Her people will in due abhorrence hold
The perpetrators of this damned deed.
On the three Cantons, therefore, she relies,
That they in nowise lend the murderer's aid;
But rather, that they loyally assist
To give them up to the avenger's hand,
Remembering the love and grace which they
Of old received from Rudolph's princely house."
[*Symptoms of dissatisfaction among the peasantry.*
MANY VOICES.
The love and grace!
STAUFF. Grace from the father we, indeed, received,
But what have we to boast of from the son?
Did he confirm the charter of our freedom,
As all preceding emperors had done?
Did he judge righteous judgment, or afford
Shelter or stay to innocence oppressed?
Nay, did he e'en give audience to the envoys
We sent to lay our grievances before him?
Not one of all these things e'er did the king.
And had we not ourselves achieved our rights
By resolute valor our necessities
Had never touched him. Gratitude to him!
Within these vales he sowed not gratitude.
He stood upon an eminence — he might
Have been a very father to his people,
But all his aim and pleasure was to raise
Himself and his own house: and now may those
Whom he has aggrandized lament for him!
FURST. We will not triumph in his fall, nor now
Recall to mind the wrongs we have endured.
Far be't from us! Yet, that we should avenge
The sovereign's death, who never did us good,
And hunt down those who ne'er molested us,
Becomes us not, nor is our duty. Love
Must bring its offerings free and unconstrained;

From all enforced duties death absolves —
And unto him we are no longer bound.

MELCH. And if the queen laments within her bower,
Accusing heaven in sorrow's wild despair;
Here see a people from its anguish freed.
To that same heaven send up its thankful praise,
For who would reap regrets must sow affection.
[*Exit the imperial courier.*

STAUFFACHER (*to the people*).
But where is Tell? Shall he, our freedom's founder,
Alone be absent from our festival?
He did the most — endured the worst of all.
Come — to his dwelling let us all repair,
And bid the savior of our country hail!
[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II.

Interior of TELL'S *cottage. A fire burning on the hearth. The open door shows the scene outside.*

HEDWIG, WALTER, *and* WILHELM.

HEDW. Boys, dearest boys! your father comes to-day.
He lives, is free, and we and all are free!
The country owes its liberty to him!

WALT. And I too, mother, bore my part in it;
I shall be named with him. My father's shaft
Went closely by my life, but yet I shook not!

HEDWIG (*embracing him*).
Yes, yes, thou art restored to me again!
Twice have I given thee birth, twice suffered all
A mother's agonies for thee, my child!
But this is past; I have you both, boys, both!
And your dear father will be back to-day.
[*A monk appears at the door.*

WILH. See, mother, yonder stands a holy friar;
He's asking alms, no doubt.

HEDWIG. Go lead him in,
That we may give him cheer, and make him feel
That he has come into the house of joy.
[*Exit, and returns immediately with a cup.*

WILHELM (*to the monk*).
Come in, good man. Mother will give you food.
WALT. Come in, and rest, then go refreshed away!
MONK (*glancing round in terror, with unquiet looks*).
Where am I? In what country?
WALTER. Have you lost
Your way, that you are ignorant of this?
You are at Bürglen, in the land of Uri,
Just at the entrance of the Sheckenthal.
MONK (*to* HEDWIG).
Are you alone? Your husband, is he here?
HEDW. I momently expect him. But what ails you?
You look as one whose soul is ill at ease.
Whoe'er you be, you are in want; take that.
[*Offers him the cup.*
MONK. Howe'er my sinking heart may yearn for food,
I will take nothing till you've promised me ——
HEDW. Touch not my dress, nor yet advance one step.
Stand off, I say, if you would have me hear you.
MONK. Oh, by this hearth's bright, hospitable blaze,
By your dear children's heads, which I em-
brace —— [*Grasps the boys.*
HEDW. Stand back, I say! What is your purpose, man?
Back from my boys! You are no monk, — no, no.
Beneath that robe content and peace should dwell,
But neither lives within that face of thine.
MONK. I am the veriest wretch that breathes on earth.
HEDW. The heart is never deaf to wretchedness;
But thy look freezes up my inmost soul.
WALTER (*springs up*).
Mother, my father!
HEDWIG. Oh, my God!
[*Is about to follow, trembles and stops.*
WILHELM (*running after his brother*). My father!
WALTER (*without*). Thou'rt here once more!
WILHELM (*without*). My father, my dear father!
TELL (*without*).
Yes, here I am once more! Where is your
mother? [*They enter.*
WALT. There at the door she stands, and can no further,
She trembles so with terror and with joy.

TELL. Oh Hedwig, Hedwig, mother of my children!
God has been kind and helpful in our woes.
No tyrant's hand shall e'er divide us more.

HEDWIG (*falling on his neck*).
Oh, Tell, what have I suffered for thy sake!
[*Monk becomes attentive.*

TELL. Forget it now, and live for joy alone!
I'm here again with you! This is my cot!
I stand again on mine own hearth!

WILHELM. But, father,
Where is your crossbow left? I see it not.

TELL. Nor shalt thou ever see it more, my boy.
It is suspended in a holy place,
And in the chase shall ne'er be used again.

HEDW. Oh, Tell, Tell!
[*Steps back, dropping his hand.*

TELL. What alarms thee, dearest wife?

HEDW. How — how dost thou return to me? This hand ——
Dare I take hold of it? This hand — Oh God!

TELL (*with firmness and animation*).
Has shielded you and set my country free;
Freely I raise it in the face of Heaven.
[MONK *gives a sudden start — he looks at him.*
Who is this friar here?

HEDWIG. Ah, I forgot him.
Speak thou with him; I shudder at his presence.

MONK (*stepping nearer*).
Are you that Tell that slew the governor?

TELL. Yes, I am he. I hide the fact from no man.

MONK. You are that Tell! Ah! it is God's own hand
That hath conducted me beneath your roof.

TELL (*examining him closely*).
You are no monk. Who are you?

MONK. You have slain
The governor, who did you wrong. I too,
Have slain a foe, who late denied me justice.
He was no less your enemy than mine.
I've rid the land of him.

TELL (*drawing back*). Thou art — oh horror!
In — children, children — in without a word.

Go, my dear wife! Go! Go! Unhappy man,
Thou shouldst be ——

HEDWIG. Heavens, who is it?

TELL. Do not ask.
Away! away! the children must not hear it.
Out of the house — away! Thou must not rest
'Neath the same roof with this unhappy man!

HEDW. Alas! What is it? Come!
[*Exit with the children.*

TELL (*to the* MONK). Thou art the Duke
Of Austria — I know it. Thou hast slain
The emperor, thy uncle, and liege lord.

JOHN. He robbed me of my patrimony.

TELL. How!
Slain him — thy king, thy uncle! And the earth
Still bears thee! And the sun still shines on thee!

JOHN. Tell, hear me, ere you ——

TELL. Reeking with the blood
Of him that was thy emperor and kinsman,
Durst thou set foot within my spotless house?
Show thy fell visage to a virtuous man,
And claim the rites of hospitality?

JOHN. I hoped to find compassion at your hands.
You also took revenge upon your foe!

TELL. Unhappy man! And dar'st thou thus confound
Ambition's bloody crime with the dread act
To which a father's direful need impelled him?
Hadst thou to shield thy children's darling heads?
To guard thy fireside's sanctuary — ward off
The last, worst doom from all that thou didst love?
To heaven I raise my unpolluted hands,
To curse thine act and thee! I have avenged
That holy nature which thou hast profaned.
I have no part with thee. Thou art a murderer;
I've shielded all that was most dear to me.

JOHN. You cast me off to comfortless despair!

TELL. My blood runs cold even while I talk with thee.

Your crime with burning penitential tears —
And if you 'scape the perils of the pass,
And are not whelmed beneath the drifted snows
That from the frozen peaks come sweeping down,
You'll reach the bridge that hangs in drizzling spray;
Then if it yield not 'neath your heavy guilt,
When you have left it safely in your rear,
Before you frowns the gloomy Gate of Rocks,
Where never sun did shine. Proceed through this,
And you will reach a bright and gladsome vale.
Yet must you hurry on with hasty steps,
For in the haunts of peace you must not linger.

JOHN. Oh, Rudolph, Rudolph, royal grandsire! thus
Thy grandson first sets foot within thy realms!

TELL. Ascending still you gain the Gotthardt's heights,
On which the everlasting lakes repose,
That from the streams of heaven itself are fed,
There to the German soil you bid farewell;
And thence, with rapid course, another stream
Leads you to Italy, your promised land.

[*Ranz des Vaches sounded on Alp-horns is heard without.*

But I hear voices! Hence!

HEDWIG (*hurrying in*). Where art thou, Tell?
Our father comes, and in exulting bands
All the confederates approach.

DUKE JOHN (*covering himself*). Woe's me!
I dare not tarry 'mid this happiness!

TELL. Go, dearest wife, and give this man to eat.
Spare not your bounty. For his road is long,
And one where shelter will be hard to find.
Quick! they approach.

HEDWIG. Who is he?

TELL. Do not ask!
And when he quits thee, turn thine eyes away
That they may not behold the road he takes.

[DUKE JOHN *advances hastily towards* TELL, *but he beckons him aside and exit. When both have left the stage, the scene changes, and discloses in*

Scene III.

The whole valley before Tell's *house, the heights which enclose it occupied by peasants, grouped into tableaux. Some are seen crossing a lofty bridge which crosses to the Sechen.* Walter Furst *with the two boys.* Werner *and* Stauffacher *come forward. Others throng after them. When* Tell *appears all receive him with loud cheers.*

All. Long live brave Tell, our shield, our liberator.

[*While those in front are crowding round* Tell *and embracing him,* Rudenz *and* Bertha *appear. The former salutes the peasantry, the latter embraces* Hedwig. *The music from the mountains continues to play. When it has stopped,* Bertha *steps into the centre of the crowd.*

Berth. Peasants! Confederates! Into your league
Receive me here that happily am the first
To find protection in the land of freedom.
To your brave hands I now intrust my rights.
Will you protect me as your citizen?

Peas. Ay, that we will, with life and fortune both!

Berth. 'Tis well! And to this youth I give my hand.
A free Swiss maiden to a free Swiss man!

Rud. And from this moment all my serfs are free!

[*Music and the curtain falls.*

DON CARLOS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PHILIP THE SECOND, *King of Spain.*
DON CARLOS, *Prince, Son of Philip.*
ALEXANDER FARNESE, *Prince of Parma.*
MARQUIS DE POSA.
DUKE OF ALVA.
COUNT LERMA, *Colonel of the Body Guard,*
DUKE OF FERIA, *Knight of the Golden Fleece,*
DUKE OF MEDINA SIDONIA, *Admiral,*
DON RAIMOND DE TAXIS, *Postmaster-General,*
} *Grandees of Spain.*
DOMINGO, *Confessor to the King.*
GRAND INQUISITOR *of Spain.*
PRIOR *of a Carthusian Convent.*
PAGE *of the Queen.*
DON LOUIS MERCADO, *Physician to the Queen.*
ELIZABETH DE VALOIS, *Queen of Spain.*
INFANTA CLARA FARNESE, *a Child three years of age.*
DUCHESS D'OLIVAREZ, *Principal Attendant on the Queen.*
MARCHIONESS DE MONDECAR,
PRINCESS EBOLI,
COUNTESS FUENTES,
} *Ladies attendant on the Queen.*
Several Ladies, Nobles, Pages, Officers of the Body-Guard, and mute Characters.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Royal Gardens in Aranjuez.

CARLOS *and* DOMINGO.

DOMINGO.

Our pleasant sojourn in Aranjuez
Is over now, and yet your highness quits
These joyous scenes no happier than before.
Our visit hath been fruitless. Oh, my prince,
Break this mysterious and gloomy silence!
Open your heart to your own father's heart!
A monarch never can too dearly buy
The peace of his own son — his only son.

[CARLOS *looks on the ground in silence.*

Is there one dearest wish that bounteous Heaven
Hath e'er withheld from her most favored child?
I stood beside, when in Toledo's walls
The lofty Charles received his vassals' homage,

When conquered princes thronged to kiss his hand,
And there at once six mighty kingdoms fell
In fealty at his feet: I stood and marked
The young, proud blood mount to his glowing cheek,
I saw his bosom swell with high resolves,
His eye, all radiant with triumphant pride,
Flash through the assembled throng; and that same eye
Confessed, "Now am I wholly satisfied!"
[CARLOS *turns away.*
This silent sorrow, which for eight long moons
Hath hung its shadows, prince, upon your brow —
The mystery of the court, the nation's grief —
Hath cost your father many a sleepless night,
And many a tear of anguish to your mother.

CARLOS (*turning hastily round*).

My mother! Grant, O heaven, I may forget
How she became my mother!

DOMINGO.

Gracious prince!

CARLOS (*passing his hands thoughtfully over his brow*).

Alas! alas! a fruitful source of woe
Have mothers been to me. My youngest act,
When first these eyes beheld the light of day,
Destroyed a mother.

DOMINGO.

Is it possible
That this reproach disturbs your conscience, prince

CARLOS.

And my new mother! Hath she not already
Cost me my father's heart? Scarce loved at best,
My claim to some small favor lay in this —
I was his only child! 'Tis over! She
Hath blest him with a daughter — and who knows
What slumbering ills the future hath in store?

DOMINGO.

You jest, my prince. All Spain adores its queen.
Shall it be thought that you, of all the world,

Alone should view her with the eyes of hate —
Gaze on her charms, and yet be coldly wise?
How, prince? The loveliest lady of her time,
A queen withal, and once your own betrothed?
No, no, impossible — it cannot be!
Where all men love, you surely cannot hate.
Carlos could never so belie himself.
I prithee, prince, take heed she do not learn
That she hath lost her son's regard. The news
Would pain her deeply.

CARLOS.

Ay, sir! think you so?

DOMINGO.

Your highness doubtless will remember how,
At the late tournament in Saragossa,
A lance's splinter struck our gracious sire.
The queen, attended by her ladies, sat
High in the centre gallery of the palace,
And looked upon the fight. A cry arose,
"The king! he bleeds!" Soon through the general din,
A rising murmur strikes upon her ear.
"The prince — the prince!" she cries, and forward rushed,
As though to leap down from the balcony,
When a voice answered, "No, the king himself!"
"Then send for his physicians!" she replied,
And straight regained her former self-composure.
[*After a short pause.*
But you seem wrapped in thought?

CARLOS.

In wonder, sir,
That the king's merry confessor should own
So rare a skill in the romancer's art. [*Austerely*
Yet have I heard it said that those
Who watch men's looks and carry tales about,
Have done more mischief in this world of ours
Than the assassin's knife, or poisoned bowl.
Your labor, sir, hath been but ill-bestowed;
Would you win thanks, go seek them of the king.

DOMINGO.

This caution, prince, is wise. Be circumspect
With men — but not with every man alike.
Repel not friends and hypocrites together;
I mean you well, believe me!

CARLOS.

Say you so?
Let not my father mark it, then, or else
Farewell your hopes forever of the purple.

DOMINGO (*starts*).

How!

CARLOS.

Even so! Hath he not promised you
The earliest purple in the gift of Spain?

DOMINGO.

You mock me, prince!

CARLOS.

Nay! Heaven forefend, that I
Should mock that awful man whose fateful lips
Can doom my father or to heaven or hell!

DOMINGO.

I dare not, prince, presume to penetrate
The sacred mystery of your secret grief,
Yet I implore your highness to remember
That, for a conscience ill at ease, the church
Hath opened an asylum, of which kings
Hold not the key — where even crimes are purged
Beneath the holy sacramental seal.
You know my meaning, prince — I've said enough.

CARLOS.

No! be it never said, I tempted so
The keeper of that seal.

DOMINGO.

Prince, this mistrust ——
You wrong the most devoted of your servants.

CARLOS.

Then give me up at once without a thought
Thou art a holy man — the world knows that —
But, to speak plain, too zealous far for me.
The road to Peter's chair is long and rough,
And too much knowledge might encumber you.
Go, tell this to the king, who sent thee hither!

DOMINGO.

Who sent me hither?

CARLOS.

Ay! Those were my words.
Too well — too well, I know, that I'm betrayed,
Slandered on every hand — that at this court
A hundred eyes are hired to watch my steps.
I know, that royal Philip to his slaves
Hath sold his only son, and every wretch,
Who takes account of each half-uttered word,
Receives such princely guerdon as was ne'er
Bestowed on deeds of honor. Oh, I know ——
But hush! — no more of that! My heart will else
O'erflow and I've already said too much.

DOMINGO.

The king is minded, ere the set of sun,
To reach Madrid: I see the court is mustering.
Have I permission, prince?

CARLOS.

I'll follow straight.
[*Exit* DOMINGO.

CARLOS (*after a short silence*).

O wretched Philip! wretched as thy son!
Soon shall thy bosom bleed at every pore,
Torn by suspicion's poisonous serpent fang.
Thy fell sagacity full soon shall pierce
The fatal secret it is bent to know,
And thou wilt madden, when it breaks upon thee!

Scene II.

Carlos, Marquis of Posa.

CARLOS.

Lo! Who comes here? 'Tis he! O ye kind heavens,
My Roderigo!

MARQUIS.

Carlos!

CARLOS.

Can it be?
And is it truly thou? O yes, it is!
I press thee to my bosom, and I feel
Thy throbbing heart beat wildly 'gainst mine own.
And now all's well again. In this embrace
My sick, sad heart is comforted. I hang
Upon my Roderigo's neck!

MARQUIS.

Thy heart!
Thy sick sad heart! And what is well again —
What needeth to be well? Thy words amaze me.

CARLOS.

What brings thee back so suddenly from Brussels?
Whom must I thank for this most glad surprise?
And dare I ask? Whom should I thank but thee,
Thou gracious and all bounteous Providence?
Forgive me, heaven! if joy hath crazed my brain.
Thou knewest no angel watched at Carlos' side,
And sent me this! And yet I ask who sent him.

MARQUIS.

Pardon, dear prince, if I can only meet
With wonder these tumultuous ecstacies.
Not thus I looked to find Don Philip's son.
A hectic red burns on your pallid cheek,
And your lips quiver with a feverish heat.
What must I think, dear prince? No more I see
The youth of lion heart, to whom I come
The envoy of a brave and suffering people.
For now I stand not here as Roderigo —

Not as the playmate of the stripling Carlos —
But, as the deputy of all mankind,
I clasp thee thus: — 'tis Flanders that clings here
Around thy neck, appealing with my tears
To thee for succor in her bitter need.
This land is lost, this land so dear to thee,
If Alva, bigotry's relentless tool,
Advance on Brussels with his Spanish laws.
This noble country's last faint hope depends
On thee, loved scion of imperial Charles!
And, should thy noble heart forget to beat
In human nature's cause, Flanders is lost!

CARLOS.

Then it is lost!

MARQUIS.

What do I hear? Alas!

CARLOS.

Thou speakest of times that long have passed away.
I, too, have had my visions of a Carlos,
Whose cheek would fire at freedom's glorious name,
But he, alas! has long been in his grave.
He, thou seest here, no longer is that Carlos,
Who took his leave of thee in Alcala,
Who in the fervor of a youthful heart,
Resolved, at some no distant time, to wake
The golden age in Spain! Oh, the conceit,
Though but a child's, was yet divinely fair!
Those dreams are past!

MARQUIS.

Said you, those dreams, my prince!
And were they only dreams?

CARLOS.

Oh, let me weep,
Upon thy bosom weep these burning tears,
My only friend! Not one have I — not one —
In the wide circuit of this earth, — not one
Far as the sceptre of my sire extends,
Far as the navies bear the flag of Spain,

There is no spot — none — none, where I dare yield
An outlet to my tears, save only this.
I charge thee, Roderigo! Oh, by all
The hopes we both do entertain of heaven,
Cast me not off from thee, my friend, my friend!
[Posa *bends over him in silent emotion.*
Look on me, Posa, as an orphan child,
Found near the throne, and nurtured by thy love.
Indeed, I know not what a father is.
I am a monarch's son. Oh, were it so,
As my heart tells me that it surely is,
That thou from millions hast been chosen out
To comprehend my being; if it be true,
That all-creating nature has designed
In me to reproduce a Roderigo,
And on the morning of our life attuned
Our souls' soft concords to the selfsame key;
If one poor tear, which gives my heart relief,
To thee were dearer than my father's favor ——

MARQUIS.

Oh, it is dearer far than all the world!

CARLOS.

I'm fallen so low, have grown so poor withal,
I must recall to thee our childhood's years, —
Must ask thee payment of a debt incurred
When thou and I were scarce to boyhood grown.
Dost thou remember, how we grew together,
Two daring youths, like brothers, side by side?
I had no sorrow but to see myself
Eclipsed by thy bright genius. So I vowed,
Since I might never cope with thee in power,
That I would love thee with excess of love.
Then with a thousand shows of tenderness,
And warm affection, I besieged thy heart,
Which cold and proudly still repulsed them all.
Oft have I stood, and — yet thou sawest it never —
Hot bitter tear-drops brimming in mine eyes,
When I have marked thee, passing me unheeded,
Fold to thy bosom youths of humbler birth.
"Why only these?" in anguish, once I asked —

"Am I not kind and good to thee as they?"
But dropping on thy knees, thine answer came,
With an unloving look of cold reserve,
"This is my duty to the monarch's son!

MARQUIS.

Oh, spare me, dearest prince, nor now recall
Those boyish acts that make me blush for shame.

CARLOS.

I did not merit such disdain from thee —
You might despise me, crush my heart, but never
Alter my love. Three times didst thou repulse
The prince, and thrice he came to thee again,
To beg thy love, and force on thee his own.
At length chance wrought what Carlos never could.
Once we were playing, when thy shuttlecock
Glanced off and struck my aunt, Bohemia's queen,
Full in the face! She thought 'twas with intent,
And all in tears complained unto the king.
The palace youth were summoned on the spot,
And charged to name the culprit. High in wrath
The king vowed vengeance for the deed: "Although
It were his son, yet still should he be made
A dread example!" I looked around and marked
Thee stand aloof, all trembling with dismay.
Straight I stepped forth; before the royal feet
I flung myself, and cried, "'Twas I who did it;
Now let thine anger fall upon thy son!"

MARQUIS.

Ah, wherefore, prince, remind me?

CARLOS.

Hear me further!
Before the face of the assembled court,
That stood, all pale with pity, round about,
Thy Carlos was tied up, whipped like a slave;
I looked on thee, and wept not. Blow rained on blow;
I gnashed my teeth with pain, yet wept I not!
My royal blood streamed 'neath the pitiless lash;
I looked on thee, and wept not. Then you came,

And fell half-choked with sobs before my feet:
"Carlos," you cried, "my pride is overcome;
I will repay thee when thou art a king."

MARQUIS (*stretching forth his hand to* CARLOS).

Carlos, I'll keep my word; my boyhood's vow
I now as man renew. I will repay thee.
Some day, perchance, the hour may come ——

CARLOS.

Now! now!
The hour has come; thou canst repay me all.
I have sore need of love. A fearful secret
Burns in my breast; it must — it must be told.
In thy pale looks my death-doom will I read.
Listen; be petrified; but answer not.
I love — I love — my mother!

MARQUIS.

O my God!

CARLOS.

Nay, no forbearance! spare me not! Speak! speak!
Proclaim aloud, that on this earth's great round
There is no misery to compare with mine.
Speak! speak! — I know all — all that thou canst say!
The son doth love his mother. All the world's
Established usages, the course of nature,
Rome's fearful laws denounce my fatal passion.
My suit conflicts with my own father's rights
I feel it all, and yet I love. This path
Leads on to madness, or the scaffold. I
Love without hope, love guiltily, love madly,
With anguish, and with peril of my life;
I see, I see it all, and yet I love.

MARQUIS.

The queen — does she know of your passion?

CARLOS.

Could I
Reveal it to her? She is Philip's wife ——
She is the queen, and this is Spanish ground,
Watched by a jealous father, hemmed around

By ceremonial forms, how, how could I
Approach her unobserved? 'Tis now eight months,
Eight maddening months, since the king summoned me
Home from my studies, since I have been doomed
To look on her, adore her day by day,
And all the while be silent as the grave!
Eight maddening months, Roderigo; think of this!
This fire has seethed and raged within my breast!
A thousand, thousand times, the dread confession
Has mounted to my lips, yet evermore
Shrunk, like a craven, back upon my heart.
O Roderigo! for a few brief moments
Alone with her!

MARQUIS.

Ah! and your father, prince!

CARLOS.

Unhappy me! Remind me not of him.
Tell me of all the torturing pangs of conscience,
But speak not, I implore you, of my father!

MARQUIS.

Then do you hate your father?

CARLOS.

No, oh, no!
I do not hate my father; but the fear
That guilty creatures feel, — a shuddering dread, —
Comes o'er me ever at that terrible name.
Am I to blame, if slavish nurture crushed
Love's tender germ within my youthful heart?
Six years I'd numbered, ere the fearful man,
They told me was my father, met mine eyes.
One morning 'twas, when with a stroke I saw him
Sign four death-warrants. After that I ne'er
Beheld him, save when, for some childish fault,
I was brought out for chastisement. O God!
I feel my heart grow bitter at the thought.
Let us away! away!

MARQUIS.

Nay, Carlos, nay,
You must, you shall give all your sorrow vent,
Let it have words! 'twill ease your o'erfraught heart.

CARLOS.

Oft have I struggled with myself, and oft
At midnight, when my guards were sunk in sleep,
With floods of burning tears I've sunk before
The image of the ever-blessed Virgin,
And craved a filial heart, but all in vain.
I rose with prayer unheard. O Roderigo!
Unfold this wondrous mystery of heaven,
Why of a thousand fathers only this
Should fall to me — and why to him this son,
Of many thousand better? Nature could not
In her wide orb have found two opposites
More diverse in their elements. How could
She bind the two extremes of human kind —
Myself and him — in one so holy bond?
O dreadful fate! Why was it so decreed?
Why should two men, in all things else apart,
Concur so fearfully in one desire?
Roderigo, here thou seest two hostile stars,
That in the lapse of ages, only once,
As they sweep onwards in their orbed course,
Touch with a crash that shakes them to the centre,
Then rush apart forever and forever.

MARQUIS.

I feel a dire foreboding.

CARLOS.

So do I.
Like hell's grim furies, dreams of dreadful shape
Pursue me still. My better genius strives
With the fell projects of a dark despair.
My wildered subtle spirit crawls through maze
On maze of sophistries, until at length
It gains a yawning precipice's brink.
O Roderigo! should I e'er in him
Forget the father — ah! thy deathlike look
Tells me I'm understood — should I forget
The father — what were then the king to me?

MARQUIS (*after a pause*).

One thing, my Carlos, let me beg of you!

Whate'er may be your plans, do nothing, — nothing, —
Without your friend's advice. You promise this?

CARLOS.

All, all I promise that thy love can ask!
I throw myself entirely upon thee!

MARQUIS.

The king, I hear, is going to Madrid.
The time is short. If with the queen you would
Converse in private, it is only here,
Here in Aranjuez, it can be done.
The quiet of the place, the freer manners,
All favor you.

CARLOS.

And such, too, was my hope;
But it, alas! was vain.

MARQUIS.

Not wholly so.
I go to wait upon her. If she be
The same in Spain she was in Henry's court,
She will be frank at least. And if I can
Read any hope for Carlos in her looks —
Find her inclined to grant an interview —
Get her attendant ladies sent away ——

CARLOS.

Most of them are my friends — especially
The Countess Mondecar, whom I have gained
By service to her son, my page.

MARQUIS.

'Tis well;
Be you at hand, and ready to appear,
Whene'er I give the signal, prince.

CARLOS.

I will, —
Be sure I will: — and all good speed attend thee!

MARQUIS.

I will not lose a moment; so, farewell.

[*Exeunt severally.*

Scene III.

The Queen's Residence in Aranjuez. The Pleasure Grounds, intersected by an avenue, terminated by the Queen's Palace.

The Queen, Duchess of Olivarez, Princess of Eboli, *and* Marchioness of Mondecar, *all advancing from the avenue.*

QUEEN (*to the* Marchioness).

I will have you beside me, Mondecar.
The princess, with these merry eyes of hers,
Has plagued me all the morning. See, she scarce
Can hide the joy she feels to leave the country.

EBOLI.

'Twere idle to conceal, my queen, that I
Shall be most glad to see Madrid once more.

MONDECAR.

And will your majesty not be so, too?
Are you so grieved to quit Aranjuez?

QUEEN.

To quit — this lovely spot at least I am.
This is my world. Its sweetness oft and oft
Has twined itself around my inmost heart.
Here, nature, simple, rustic nature greets me,
The sweet companion of my early years —
Here I indulge once more my childhood's sports,
And my dear France's gales come blowing here.
Blame not this partial fondness — all hearts yearn
For their own native land.

EBOLI.

But then how lone,
How dull and lifeless it is here! We might
As well be in La Trappe.

QUEEN.

I cannot see it.
To me Madrid alone is lifeless. But
What saith our duchess to it?

OLIVAREZ.

Why, methinks,
Your majesty, since kings have ruled in Spain,
It hath been still the custom for the court
To pass the summer months alternately
Here and at Pardo, — in Madrid, the winter.

QUEEN.

Well, I suppose it has! Duchess, you know
I've long resigned all argument with you.

MONDECAR.

Next month Madrid will be all life and bustle.
They're fitting up the Plaza Mayor now,
And we shall have rare bull-fights; and, besides,
A grand *auto da fé* is promised us.

QUEEN.

Promised? This from my gentle Mondecar!

MONDECAR.

Why not? 'Tis only heretics they burn!

QUEEN.

I hope my Eboli thinks otherwise!

EBOLI.

What, I? I beg your majesty may think me
As good a Christian as the marchioness.

QUEEN.

Alas! I had forgotten where I am, —
No more of this! We were speaking, I think,
About the country? And methinks this month
Has flown away with strange rapidity.
I counted on much pleasure, very much,
From our retirement here, and yet I have not
Found that which I expected. Is it thus
With all our hopes? And yet I cannot say
One wish of mine is left ungratified.

OLIVAREZ.

You have not told us, Princess Eboli,
If there be hope for Gomez, — and if we may
Expect ere long to greet you as his bride?

QUEEN.

True — thank you, duchess, for reminding me!
[*Addressing the* PRINCESS.
I have been asked to urge his suit with you.
But can I do it? The man whom I reward
With my sweet Eboli must be a man
Of noble stamp indeed.

OLIVAREZ.

And such he is,
A man of mark and fairest fame, — a man
Whom our dear monarch signally has graced
With his most royal favor.

QUEEN.

He's happy in
Such high good fortune; but we fain would know,
If he can love, and win return of love.
This Eboli must answer.

EBOLI (*stands speechless and confused, her eyes bent on the ground; at last she falls at the* QUEEN'S *feet*).

Gracious queen!
Have pity on me! Let me — let me not, —
For heaven's sake, let me not be sacrificed.

QUEEN.

Be sacrificed! I need no more. Arise!
'Tis a hard fortune to be sacrificed.
I do believe you. Rise. And is it long
Since you rejected Gomez' suit?

EBOLI.

Some months —
Before Prince Carlos came from Alcala.

QUEEN (*starts and looks at her with an inquisitive glance*).

Have you tried well the grounds of your refusal?

EBOLI (*with energy*).

It cannot be, my queen, no, never, never, —
For a thousand reasons, never!

QUEEN.

One's enough,
You do not love him. That suffices me.
Now let it pass. [*To her other ladies.*
I have not seen the Infanta
Yet this morning. Pray bring her, marchioness.

OLIVAREZ (*looking at the clock*).

It is not yet the hour, your majesty.

QUEEN.

Not yet the hour for me to be a mother!
That's somewhat hard. Forget not, then, to tell me
When the right hour does come.

[*A page enters and whispers to the first lady, who thereupon turns to the* QUEEN.

OLIVAREZ.

The Marquis Posa!
May it please your majesty.

QUEEN.

The Marquis Posa!

OLIVAREZ.

He comes from France, and from the Netherlands,
And craves the honor to present some letters
Intrusted to him by your royal mother.

QUEEN.

Is this allowed?

OLIVAREZ (*hesitating*).

A case so unforeseen
Is not provided for in my instructions.
When a Castilian grandee, with despatches
From foreign courts, shall in her garden find
The Queen of Spain, and tender them ——

QUEEN.

Enough!
I'll venture, then, on mine own proper peril.

OLIVAREZ.

May I, your majesty, withdraw the while?

QUEEN.

E'en as you please, good duchess!

[*Exit the* DUCHESS, *the* QUEEN *gives the* PAGE *a sign, who thereupon retires.*

SCENE IV.

The QUEEN, PRINCESS EBOLI, MARCHIONESS OF MONDECAR, *and* MARQUIS OF POSA.

QUEEN.

I bid you welcome, sir, to Spanish ground!

MARQUIS.

Ground which I never with so just a pride
Hailed for the country of my sires as now.

QUEEN (*to the two ladies*).

The Marquis Posa, ladies, who at Rheims
Coped with my father in the lists, and made
My colors thrice victorious; the first
That made me feel how proud a thing it was
To be the Queen of Spain and Spanish men.

[*Turning to the* MARQUIS.

When we last parted in the Louvre, sir,
You scarcely dreamed that I should ever be
Your hostess in Castile.

MARQUIS.

Most true, my liege!
For at that time I never could have dreamed
That France should lose to us the only thing
We envied her possessing.

QUEEN.

How, proud Spaniard!
The only thing! And you can venture this —
This to a daughter of the house of Valois!

MARQUIS.

I venture now to say it, gracious queen,
Since now you are our own,

QUEEN.

Your journey hither
Has led you, as I hear, through France. What news
Have you brought with you from my honored mother
And from my dearest brothers?

MARQUIS (*handing letters*).

I left your royal mother sick at heart,
Bereft of every joy save only this,
To know her daughter happy on the throne
Of our imperial Spain.

QUEEN.

Could she be aught
But happy in the dear remembrances
Of relatives so kind — in the sweet thoughts
Of the old time when —— Sir, you've visited
Full many a court in these your various travels,
And seen strange lands and customs manifold;
And now, they say, you mean to keep at home
A greater prince in your retired domain
Than is King Philip on his throne — a freer.
You're a philosopher; but much I doubt
If our Madrid will please you. We are so —
So quiet in Madrid.

MARQUIS.

And that is more
Than all the rest of Europe has to boast.

QUEEN.

I've heard as much. But all this world's concerns
Are well-nigh blotted from my memory.
[*To* PRINCESS EBOLI.
Princess, methinks I see a hyacinth
Yonder in bloom. Wilt bring it to me, sweet?
[*The* PRINCESS *goes towards the palace, the* QUEEN *softly to the* MARQUIS.
I'm much mistaken, sir, or your arrival
Has made one heart more happy here at court.

MARQUIS.

I have found a sad one — one that in this world
A ray of sunshine ——

EBOLI.

As this gentleman
Has seen so many countries, he, no doubt,
Has much of note to tell us.

MARQUIS.

Doubtless, and
To seek adventures is a knight's first duty —
But his most sacred is to shield the fair.

MONDECAR.

From giants! But there are no giants now!

MARQUIS.

Power is a giant ever to the weak.

QUEEN.

The chevalier says well. There still are giants;
But there are knights no more.

MARQUIS.

Not long ago,
On my return from Naples, I became
The witness of a very touching story,
Which ties of friendship almost make my own
Were I not fearful its recital might
Fatigue your majesty ——

QUEEN.

Have I a choice?
The princess is not to be lightly balked.
Proceed. I too, sir, love a story dearly.

MARQUIS.

Two noble houses in Mirandola,
Weary of jealousies and deadly feuds,
Transmitted down from Guelphs and Ghibellines,
Through centuries of hate, from sire to son,
Resolved to ratify a lasting peace
By the sweet ministry of nuptial ties.
Fernando, nephew of the great Pietro,
And fair Matilda, old Colonna's child,
Were chosen to cement this holy bond.

Nature had never for each other formed
Two fairer hearts. And never had the world
Approved a wiser or a happier choice.
Still had the youth adored his lovely bride
In the dull limner's portraiture alone.
How thrilled his heart, then, in the hope to find
The truth of all that e'en his fondest dreams
Had scarcely dared to credit in her picture!
In Padua, where his studies held him bound;
Fernando panted for the joyful hour,
When he might murmur at Matilda's feet
The first pure homage of his fervent love.

[*The* QUEEN *grows more attentive; the* MARQUIS *continues, after a short pause, addressing himself chiefly to* PRINCESS EBOLI.

Meanwhile the sudden death of Pietro's wife
Had left him free to wed. With the hot glow
Of youthful blood the hoary lover drinks
The fame that reached him of Matilda's charms.
He comes — he sees — he loves! The new desire
Stifles the voice of nature in his heart.
The uncle woos his nephew's destined bride,
And at the altar consecrates his theft.

QUEEN.

And what did then Fernando?

MARQUIS.

On the wings
Of love, unconscious of the fearful change,
Delirious with the promised joy, he speeds
Back to Mirandola. His flying steed
By starlight gains the gate. Tumultuous sounds
Of music, dance, and jocund revelry
Ring from the walls of the illumined palace.
With faltering stops he mounts the stair; and now
Behold him in the crowded nuptial hall,
Unrecognized! Amid the reeling guests
Pietro sat. An angel at his side —
An angel, whom he knows, and who to him
Even in his dreams, seemed ne'er so beautiful.

A single glance revealed what once was his —
Revealed what now was lost to him forever.

EBOLI.

O poor Fernando!

QUEEN.

Surely, sir, your tale
Is ended? Nay, it must be.

MARQUIS.

No, not quite.

QUEEN.

Did you not say Fernando was your friend?

MARQUIS.

I have no dearer in the world.

EBOLI.

But pray
Proceed, sir, with your story.

MARQUIS.

Nay, the rest
Is very sad — and to recall it sets
My sorrow fresh abroach. Spare me the sequel.

[*A general silence.*

QUEEN (*turning to the* PRINCESS EBOLI).

Surely the time is come to see my daughter,
I prithee, princess, bring her to me now!

[*The* PRINCESS *withdraws. The* MARQUIS *beckons a Page. The* QUEEN *opens the letters, and appears surprised. The* MARQUIS *talks with* MARCHIONESS MONDECAR. *The* QUEEN *having read the letters, turns to the* MARQUIS *with a penetrating look.*

QUEEN.

You have not spoken of Matilda! She
Haply was ignorant of Fernando's grief?

MARQUIS.

Matilda's heart has no one fathomed yet —
Great souls endure in silence.

QUEEN.

You look around you. Who is it you seek?

MARQUIS.

Just then the thought came over me, how one,
Whose name I dare not mention, would rejoice
Stood he where I do now.

QUEEN.

And who's to blame,
That he does not?

MARQUIS (*interrupting her eagerly*).

My liege! And dare I venture
To interpret thee, as fain I would? He'd find
Forgiveness, then, if now he should appear.

QUEEN (*alarmed*).

Now, marquis, now? What do you mean by this?

MARQUIS.

Might he, then, hope?

QUEEN.

You terrify me, marquis.
Surely he will not ——

MARQUIS.

He is here already.

Scene V.

The QUEEN, CARLOS, MARQUIS POSA, MARCHIONESS MONDECAR. *The two latter go towards the avenue.*

CARLOS (*on his knees before the* QUEEN).

At length 'tis come — the happy moment's come,
And Charles may touch this all-beloved hand.

QUEEN.

What headlong folly's this? And dare you break
Into my presence thus? Arise, rash man!
We are observed; my suite are close at hand.

CARLOS.

I will not rise. Here will I kneel forever,
Here will I lie enchanted at your feet,
And grow to the dear ground you tread on?

QUEEN.

Madman
To what rude boldness my indulgence leads!
Know you, it is the queen, your mother, sir,
Whom you address in such presumptuous strain?
Know, that myself will to the king report
This bold intrusion ——

CARLOS.

And that I must die!
Let them come here, and drag me to the scaffold!
A moment spent in paradise like this
Is not too dearly purchased by a life.

QUEEN.

But then your queen?

CARLOS (*rising*).

O God, I'll go, I'll go!
Can I refuse to bend to that appeal?
I am your very plaything. Mother, mother,
A sign, a transient glance, one broken word
From those dear lips can bid me live or die.
What would you more? Is there beneath the sun
One thing I would not haste to sacrifice
To meet your lightest wish?

QUEEN.

Then fly!

CARLOS.

God!

QUEEN.

With tears I do conjure you, Carlos, fly!
I ask no more. O fly! before my court,
My guards, detecting us alone together,
Bear the dread tidings to your father's ear.

CARLOS.

I bide my doom, or be it life or death.
Have I staked every hope on this one moment,
Which gives thee to me thus at length alone,
That idle fears should balk me of my purpose?
No, queen! The world may round its axis roll
A hundred thousand times, ere chance again
Yield to my prayers a moment such as this.

QUEEN.

It never shall to all eternity.
Unhappy man! What would you ask of me?

CARLOS.

Heaven is my witness, queen, how I have struggled,
Struggled as mortal never did before,
But all in vain! My manhood fails — I yield.

QUEEN.

No more of this — for my sake — for my peace.

CARLOS.

You were mine own, — in face of all the world, —
Affianced to me by two mighty crowns,
By heaven and nature plighted as my bride,
But Philip, cruel Philip, stole you from me

QUEEN.

He is your father?

CARLOS.

And he is your husband!

QUEEN.

And gives to you for an inheritance,
The mightiest monarchy in all the world

CARLOS.

And you, as mother!

QUEEN.

Mighty heavens! You rave!

CARLOS.

And is he even conscious of his treasure?
Hath he a heart to feel and value yours?

I'll not complain — no, no, I will forget,
How happy, past all utterance, I might
Have been with you, — if he were only so.
But he is not — there, there, the anguish lies!
He is not, and he never — never can be.
Oh, you have robbed me of my paradise,
Only to blast it in King Philip's arms!

QUEEN.

Horrible thought!

CARLOS.

Oh, yes, right well I know
Who 'twas that knit this ill-starred marriage up.
I know how Philip loves, and how he wooed.
What are you in this kingdom — tell me, what?
Regent, belike! Oh, no! If such you were,
How could fell Alvas act their murderous deeds,
Or Flanders bleed a martyr for her faith?
Are you even Philip's wife? Impossible, —
Beyond belief. A wife doth still possess
Her husband's heart. To whom doth his belong?
If ever, perchance, in some hot feverish mood,
He yields to gentler impulse, begs he not
Forgiveness of his sceptre and gray hairs?

QUEEN.

Who told you that my lot, at Philip's side
Was one for men to pity?

CARLOS.

My own heart!
Which feels, with burning pangs, how at my side
It had been to be envied.

QUEEN.

Thou vain man!
What if my heart should tell me the reverse?
How, sir, if Philip's watchful tenderness,
The looks that silently proclaim his love,
Touched me more deeply than his haughty son's
Presumptuous eloquence? What, if an old man's
Matured esteem ——

CARLOS.

That makes a difference! Then,
Why then, forgiveness! — I'd no thought of this;
I had no thought that you could love the king.

QUEEN.

To honor him's my pleasure and my wish.

CARLOS.

Then you have never loved?

QUEEN.

Singular question!

CARLOS.

Then you have never loved?

QUEEN.

I love no longer!

CARLOS.

Because your heart forbids it, or your oath?

QUEEN.

Leave me; nor never touch this theme again.

CARLOS.

Because your oath forbids it, or your heart?

QUEEN.

Because my duty — but, alas, alas!
To what avails this scrutiny of fate,
Which we must both obey?

CARLOS.

Must — must obey?

QUEEN.

What means this solemn tone?

CARLOS.

Thus much it means:
That Carlos is not one to yield to must
Where he hath power to will! It means, besides,
That Carlos is not minded to live on,

The most unhappy man in all his realm,
When it would only cost the overthrow
Of Spanish laws to be the happiest.

QUEEN.

Do I interpret rightly? Still you hope?
Dare you hope on, when all is lost forever?

CARLOS.

I look on naught as lost — except the dead.

QUEEN.

For me — your mother, do you dare to hope?
[*She fixes a penetrating look on him, then continues with dignity and earnestness.*
And yet why not? A new elected monarch
Can do far more — make bonfires of the laws
His father left — o'erthrow his monuments —
Nay, more than this — for what shall hinder him? —
Drag from his tomb, in the Escurial,
The sacred corpse of his departed sire,
Make it a public spectacle, and scatter
Forth to the winds his desecrated dust.
And then, at last, to fill the measure up, ——

CARLOS

Merciful heavens, finish not the picture!

QUEEN.

End all by wedding with his mother.

CARLOS.

Oh!
Accursed son!
[*He remains for some time paralyzed and speechless.*
Yes, now 'tis out, 'tis out!
I see it clear as day. Oh, would it had
Been veiled from me in everlasting darkness!
Yes, thou art gone from me — gone — gone forever.
The die is cast; and thou art lost to me.
Oh, in that thought lies hell; and a hell, too,
Lies in the other thought, to call thee mine.

Oh, misery! I can bear my fate no longer,
My very heart-strings strain as they would burst.

QUEEN.

Alas, alas! dear Charles, I feel it all,
The nameless pang that rages in your breast;
Your pangs are infinite, as is your love,
And infinite as both will be the glory
Of overmastering both. Up, be a man,
Wrestle with them boldly. The prize is worthy
Of a young warrior's high, heroic heart;
Worthy of him in whom the virtues flow
Of a long ancestry of mighty kings.
Courage! my noble prince! Great Charles's grandson
Begins the contest with undaunted heart,
Where sons of meaner men would yield at once.

CARLOS.

Too late, too late! O God, it is too late!

QUEEN.

Too late to be a man! O Carlos, Carlos!
How nobly shows our virtue when the heart
Breaks in its exercise! The hand of Heaven
Has set you up on high, — far higher, prince,
Than millions of your brethren. All she took
From others she bestowed with partial hand
On thee, her favorite; and millions ask,
What was your merit, thus before your birth
To be endowed so far above mankind?
Up, then, and justify the ways of Heaven;
Deserve to take the lead of all the world,
And make a sacrifice ne'er made before.

CARLOS.

I will, I will; I have a giant's strength
To win your favor; but to lose you, none.

QUEEN.

Confess, my Carlos, I have harshly read thee;
It is but spleen, and waywardness, and pride,
Attract you thus so madly to your mother!

The heart you lavish on myself belongs
To the great empire you one day shall rule.
Look that you sport not with your sacred trust!
Love is your high vocation; until now
It hath been wrongly bent upon your mother:
Oh, lead it back upon your future realms,
And so, instead of the fell stings of conscience,
Enjoy the bliss of being more than man.
Elizabeth has been your earliest love,
Your second must be Spain. How gladly, Carlos,
Will I give place to this more worthy choice!

CARLOS (*overpowered by emotion, throws himself at her feet.*)

How great thou art, my angel! Yes, I'll do
All, all thou canst desire. So let it be.

[*He rises.*

Here in the sight of heaven I stand and swear —
I swear to thee, eternal — no, great Heaven! —
Eternal silence only, — not oblivion!

QUEEN.

How can I ask from you what I myself
Am not disposed to grant?

MARQUIS (*hastening from the alley*).

The king!

QUEEN.

Oh God!

MARQUIS.

Away, away! fly from these precincts, prince!

QUEEN.

His jealousy is dreadful — should he see you ——

CARLOS.

I'll stay.

QUEEN.

And who will be the victim then?

CARLOS (*seizing the* MARQUIS *by the arm*).

Away, away! Come, Roderigo, come!

[*Goes and returns.*

What may I hope to carry hence with me?

QUEEN.

Your mother's friendship.

CARLOS.

Friendship! Mother!

QUEEN.

And
These tears with it — they're from the Netherlands.

[*She gives him some letters. Exit* CARLOS *with the* MARQUIS. *The* QUEEN *looks restlessly round in search of her ladies, who are nowhere to be seen. As she is about to retire up, the* KING *enters.*

SCENE VI.

The KING, *the* QUEEN, DUKE ALVA, COUNT LERMA, DOMINGO, LADIES, GRANDEES, *who remain at a little distance.*

KING.

How, madam, alone; not even one of all
Your ladies in attendance? Strange! Where are they?

QUEEN.

My gracious lord!

KING.

Why thus alone, I say?
[*To his attendants.*
I'll take a strict account of this neglect.
'Tis not to be forgiven. Who has the charge
Of waiting on your majesty to-day?

QUEEN.

Oh, be not angry! Good, my lord, 'tis I
Myself that am to blame — at my request
The Princess Eboli went hence but now.

KING.

At your request!

QUEEN.

To call the nurse to me,
With the Infanta, whom I longed to see.

KING.

And was your retinue dismissed for that?
This only clears the lady first in waiting.
Where was the second?

MONDECAR (*who has returned and mixed with the other ladies, steps forward*).

Your majesty, I feel
I am to blame for this.

KING.

You are, and so
I give you ten years to reflect upon it,
At a most tranquil distance from Madrid.

[*The* MARCHIONESS *steps back weeping. General silence. The bystanders all look in confusion towards the* QUEEN.

QUEEN.

What weep you for, dear marchioness? [*To the* KING. If I
Have erred, my gracious liege, the crown I wear,
And which I never sought, should save my blushes
Is there a law in this your kingdom, sire,
To summon monarch's daughters to the bar?
Does force alone restrain your Spanish ladies?
Or need they stronger safeguard than their virtue?
Now pardon me, my liege; 'tis not my wont
To send my ladies, who have served me still
With smiling cheerfulness, away in tears.
Here, Mondecar.

[*She takes off her girdle and presents it to the* MARCHIONESS.

You have displeased the king,
Not me. Take this remembrance of my favor,
And of this hour. I'd have you quit the kingdom.
You have only erred in Spain. In my dear France,
All men are glad to wipe such tears away.
And must I ever be reminded thus?
In my dear France it had been otherwise.

[*Leaning on the* MARCHIONESS *and covering her face.*

KING.

Can a reproach, that in my love had birth,
Afflict you so? A word so trouble you,
Which the most anxious tenderness did prompt?
[*He turns towards the* GRANDEES.
Here stand the assembled vassals of my throne.
Did ever sleep descend upon these eyes,
Till at the close of the returning day
I've pondered, how the hearts of all my subjects
Were beating 'neath the furthest cope of heaven?
And should I feel more anxious for my throne
Than for the partner of my bosom? No!
My sword and Alva can protect my people,
My eye alone assures thy love.

QUEEN.

My liege,
If that I have offended ——

KING.

I am called
The richest monarch in the Christian world;
The sun in my dominions never sets.
All this another hath possessed before,
And many another will possess hereafter.
That is mine own. All that the monarch hath
Belongs to chance — Elizabeth to Philip.
This is the point in which I feel I'm mortal.

QUEEN.

What fear you, sire?

KING.

Should these gray hairs not fear?
But the same instant that my fear begins
It dies away forever. [*To the grandees.*
I run over
The nobles of my court and miss the foremost.
Where is my son, Don Carlos? [*No one answers.*
He begins
To give me cause of fear. He shuns my presence
Since he came back from school at Alcala.
His blood is hot. Why is his look so cold?

His bearing all so stately and reserved?
Be watchful, duke, I charge you.

ALVA.

So I am:
Long as a heart against this corslet beats,
So long may Philip slumber undisturbed;
And as God's cherub guards the gates of heaven
So doth Duke Alva guard your royal throne.

LERMA.

Dare I, in all humility, presume
To oppose the judgment of earth's wisest king?
Too deeply I revere his gracious sire
To judge the son so harshly. I fear much
From his hot blood, but nothing from his heart.

KING.

Lerma, your speech is fair to soothe the father,
But Alva here will be the monarch's shield —
No more of this.

[*Turning to his suite.*

Now speed we to Madrid,
Our royal duties summon us. The plague
Of heresy is rife among my people;
Rebellion stalks within my Netherlands —
The times are imminent. We must arrest
These erring spirits by some dread example.
The solemn oath which every Christian king
Hath sworn to keep I will redeem to-morrow.
'Twill be a day of doom unparalleled.
Our court is bidden to the festival.

[*He leads off the* QUEEN, *the rest follow.*

SCENE VII.

DON CARLOS (*with letters in his hand*), *and* MARQUIS POSA *enter from opposite sides.*

CARLOS.

I am resolved — Flanders shall yet be saved:
So runs her suit, and that's enough for me!

MARQUIS.

There's not another moment to be lost:
'Tis said Duke Alva in the cabinet
Is named already as the governor.

CARLOS.

Betimes to-morrow will I see the king
And ask this office for myself. It is
The first request I ever made to him,
And he can scarce refuse. My presence here
Has long been irksome to him. He will grasp
This fair pretence my absence to secure.
And shall I confess to thee, Roderigo?
My hopes go further. Face to face with him,
'Tis possible the pleading of a son
May reinstate him in his father's favor.
He ne'er hath heard the voice of nature speak;
Then let me try for once, my Roderigo,
What power she hath when breathing from my lips.

MARQUIS.

Now do I hear my Carlos' voice once more;
Now are you all yourself again!

Scene VIII.

The preceding. Count Lerma.

COUNT.

Your grace,
His majesty has left Aranjuez;
And I am bidden ——

CARLOS.

Very well, my lord —
I shall overtake the king —

MARQUIS (*affecting to take leave with ceremony*).

Your highness, then,
Has nothing further to intrust to me?

CARLOS.

Nothing. A pleasant journey to Madrid!
You may, hereafter, tell me more of Flanders.
[*To* Lerma, *who is waiting for him.*
Proceed, my lord! I'll follow thee anon.

Scene IX.

Don Carlos, Marquis Posa.

CARLOS.

I understood thy hint, and thank thee for it.
A stranger's presence can alone excuse
This forced and measured tone. Are we not brothers?
In future, let this puppet-play of rank
Be banished from our friendship. Think that we
Had met at some gay masking festival,
Thou in the habit of a slave, and I
Robed, for a jest, in the imperial purple.
Throughout the revel we respect the cheat,
And play our parts with sportive earnestness,
Tripping it gayly with the merry throng;
But should thy Carlos beckon through his mask,
Thou'dst press his hand in silence as he passed,
And we should be as one.

MARQUIS.

The dream's divine!
But are you sure that it will last forever?
Is Carlos, then, so certain of himself
As to despise the charms of boundless sway?
A day will come — an all-important day —
When this heroic mind — I warn you now —
Will sink o'erwhelmed by too severe a test.
Don Philip dies; and Carlos mounts the throne,
The mightiest throne in Christendom. How vast
The gulp that yawns betwixt mankind and him —
A god to-day, who yesterday was man!
Steeled to all human weakness — to the voice
Of heavenly duty deaf. Humanity —
To-day a word of import in his ear —
Barters itself, and grovels 'mid the throng
Of gaping parasites; his sympathy
For human woe is turned to cold neglect,
His virtue sunk in loose voluptuous joys.
Peru supplies him riches for his folly,
His court engenders devils for his vices.
Lulled in this heaven the work of crafty slaves

He sleeps a charmed sleep; and while his dream
Endures his godhead lasts. And woe to him
Who'd break in pity this lethargic trance!
What could Roderigo do? Friendship is true,
And bold as true. But her bright flashing beams
Were much too fierce for sickly majesty:
You would not brook a subject's stern appeal,
Nor I a monarch's pride!

CARLOS.

Tearful and true,
Thy portraiture of monarchs. Yes — thou'rt right,
But 'tis their lusts that thus corrupt their hearts,
And hurry them to vice. I still am pure.
A youth scarce numbering three-and-twenty years.
What thousands waste in riotous delights,
Without remorse — the mind's more precious part —
The bloom and strength of manhood — I have kept,
Hoarding their treasures for the future king.
What could unseat my Posa from my heart,
If woman fail to do it?

MARQUIS.

I, myself!
Say, could I love you, Carlos, warm as now,
If I must fear you?

CARLOS.

That will never be.
What need hast thou of me? What cause hast thou
To stoop thy knee, a suppliant at the throne?
Does gold allure thee? Thou'rt a richer subject
Than I shall be a king! Dost covet honors?
E'en in thy youth, fame's brimming chalice stood
Full in thy grasp — thou flung'st the toy away.
Which of us, then, must be the other's debtor,
And which the creditor? Thou standest mute.
Dost tremble for the trial? Art thou, then,
Uncertain of thyself?

MARQUIS.

Carlos, I yield!
Here is my hand

CARLOS.

Is it mine own

MARQUIS.

Forever —
In the most pregnant meaning of the word!

CARLOS.

And wilt thou prove hereafter to the king
As true and warm as to the prince to-day?

MARQUIS.

I swear!

CARLOS.

And when round my unguarded heart
The serpent flattery winds its subtle coil,
Should e'er these eyes of mine forget the tears
They once were wont to shed; or should these ears
Be closed to mercy's plea, — say, wilt thou, then,
The fearless guardian of my virtue, throw
Thine iron grasp upon me, and call up
My genius by its mighty name?

MARQUIS.

I will.

CARLOS.

And now one other favor let me beg.
Do call me *thou!* Long have I envied this
Dear privilege of friendship to thine equals.
The brother's *thou* beguiles my ear, my heart,
With sweet suggestions of equality.
Nay, no reply: — I guess what thou wouldst say —
To thee this seems a trifle — but to me,
A monarch's son, 'tis much. Say, wilt thou be
A brother to me?

MARQUIS.

Yes; thy brother, yes!

CARLOS.

Now to the king — my fears are at an end.
Thus, arm-in-arm with thee, I dare defy
The universal world into the lists. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The royal palace at Madrid.

KING PHILIP *under a canopy;* DUKE ALVA *at some distance, with his head covered;* CARLOS.

CARLOS.

The kingdom takes precedence — willingly
Doth Carlos to the minister give place —
He speaks for Spain; I am but of the household.
[*Bows and steps backward*

KING.

The duke remains — the Infanta may proceed.

CARLOS (*turning to* ALVA).

Then must I put it to your honor, sir,
To yield my father for a while to me.
A son, you know, may to a father's ear
Unbosom much, in fulness of his heart,
That not befits a stranger's ear. The king
Shall not be taken from you, sir — I seek
The father only for one little hour.

KING.

Here stands his friend.

CARLOS.

And have I e'er deserved
To think the duke should be a friend of mine?

KING.

Or tried to make him one? I scarce can love
Those sons who choose more wisely than their fathers.

CARLOS.

And can Duke Alva's knightly spirit brook
To look on such a scene? Now, as I live,
I would not play the busy meddler's part,
Who thrusts himself, unasked, 'twixt sire and son,
And there intrudes without a blush, condemned
By his own conscious insignificance,
No, not, by heaven, to win a diadem!

KING (*rising, with an angry look at the Prince*).

Retire, my lord!

[ALVA *goes to the principal door, through which* CARLOS *had entered, the* KING *points to the other.*

No, to the cabinet,
Until I call you.

SCENE II.

KING PHILIP. DON CARLOS.

CARLOS (*as soon as the* DUKE *has left the apartment, advances to the* KING, *throws himself at his feet, and then, with great emotion*).

My father once again!
Thanks, endless thanks, for this unwonted favor!
Your hand, my father! O delightful day!
The rapture of this kiss has long been strange
To your poor Carlos. Wherefore have I been
Shut from my father's heart? What have I done?

KING.

Carlos, thou art a novice in these arts —
Forbear, I like them not ——

CARLOS (*rising*).

And is it so?
I hear your courtiers in those words, my father!
All is not well, by heaven, all is not true,
That a priest says, and a priest's creatures plot.
I am not wicked, father; ardent blood
Is all my failing; — all my crime is youth; —
Wicked I am not — no, in truth, not wicked; —
Though many an impulse wild assails my heart,
Yet is it still untainted.

KING.

Ay, 'tis pure —
I know it — like thy prayers ——

CARLOS.

Now, then, or never!
We are, for once, alone — the barrier
Of courtly form, that severed sire and son,

Has fallen! Now a golden ray of hope
Illumes my soul — a sweet presentment
Pervades my heart — and heaven itself inclines,
With choirs of joyous angels, to the earth,
And full of soft emotion, the thrice blest
Looks down upon this great, this glorious scene!
Pardon, my father!

[*He falls on his knees before him.*

KING.

Rise, and leave me.

CARLOS.

Father

KING (*tearing himself from him*).

This trifling grows too bold.

CARLOS.

A son's devotion

Too bold! Alas!

KING.

And, to crown all, in tears!
Degraded boy! Away, and quit my sight!

CARLOS.

Now, then, or never! — pardon, O my father!

KING.

Away, and leave my sight! Return to me
Disgraced, defeated, from the battle-field,
Thy sire shall meet thee with extended arms:
But thus in tears, I spurn thee from my feet.
A coward's guilt alone should wash its stains
In such ignoble streams. The man who weeps
Without a blush will ne'er want cause for tears!

CARLOS.

Who is this man? By what mistake of nature
Has he thus strayed amongst mankind? A tear
Is man's unerring, lasting attribute.
Whose eye is dry was ne'er of woman born!
Oh, teach the eye that ne'er hath overflowed,

The timely science of a tear — thou'lt need
The moist relief in some dark hour of woe.

KING.

Think'st thou to shake thy father's strong mistrust
With specious words?

CARLOS.

Mistrust! Then I'll remove it
Here will I hang upon my father's breast,
Strain at his heart with vigor, till each shred
Of that mistrust, which, with a rock's endurance,
Clings firmly round it, piecemeal fall away.
And who are they who drive me from the king —
My father's favor? What requital hath
A monk to give a father for a son?
What compensation can the duke supply
For a deserted and a childless age?
Would'st thou be loved? Here in this bosom springs
A fresher, purer fountain, than e'er flowed
From those dark, stagnant, muddy reservoirs,
Which Philip's gold must first unlock.

KING.

No more,
Presuming boy! For know the hearts thou slanderest
Are the approved, true servants of my choice.
'Tis meet that thou do honor to them.

CARLOS.

Never!
I know my worth — all that your Alva dares —
That, and much more, can Carlos. What cares he,
A hireling! for the welfare of the realm
That never can be his? What careth he
If Philip's hair grow gray with hoary age?
Your Carlos would have loved you: — Oh, I dread
To think that you the royal throne must fill
Deserted and alone.

KING (*seemingly struck by this idea, stands in deep thought; after a pause*).

I am alone!

CARLOS (*approaching him with eagerness*).

You have been so till now. Hate me no more,
And I will love you dearly as a son:
But hate me now no longer! Oh, how sweet,
Divinely sweet it is to feel our being
Reflected in another's beauteous soul;
To see our joys gladden another's cheek,
Our pains bring anguish to another's bosom,
Our sorrows fill another's eye with tears!
How sweet, how glorious is it, hand in hand,
With a dear child, in inmost soul beloved,
To tread once more the rosy paths of youth,
And dream life's fond illusions o'er again!
How proud to live through endless centuries
Immortal in the virtues of a son;
How sweet to plant what his dear hand shall reap;
To gather what will yield him rich return,
And guess how high his thanks will one day rise!
My father of this early paradise
Your monks most wisely speak not.

KING (*not without emotion*).

Oh, my son,
Thou hast condemned thyself in painting thus
A bliss this heart hath ne'er enjoyed from thee.

CARLOS.

The Omniscient be my judge! You till this hour
Have still debarred me from your heart, and all
Participation in your royal cares.
The heir of Spain has been a very stranger
In Spanish land — a prisoner in the realm
Where he must one day rule. Say, was this just,
Or kind? And often have I blushed for shame,
And stood with eyes abashed, to learn perchance
From foreign envoys, or the general rumor,
Thy courtly doings at Aranjuez.

KING.

Thy blood flows far too hotly in thy veins.
Thou would'st but ruin all.

CARLOS.

But try me, father.
'Tis true my blood flows hotly in my veins.
Full three-and-twenty years I now have lived,
And naught achieved for immortality.
I am aroused — I feel my inward powers —
My title to the throne arouses me
From slumber, like an angry creditor;
And all the misspent hours of early youth,
Like debts of honor, clamor in mine ears.
It comes at length, the glorious moment comes
That claims full interest on the intrusted talent
The annals of the world, ancestral fame,
And glory's echoing trumpet urge me on.
Now is the blessed hour at length arrived
That opens wide to me the list of honor.
My king, my father! dare I utter now
The suit which led me hither?

KING.

Still a suit?
Unfold it.

CARLOS.

The rebellion in Brabant
Increases to a height — the traitor's madness
By stern, but prudent, vigor must be met.
The duke, to quell the wild enthusiasm,
Invested with the sovereign's power, will lead
An army into Flanders. Oh, how full
Of glory is such office! and how suited
To open wide the temple of renown
To me, your son! To my hand, then, O king,
Intrust the army; in thy Flemish lands
I am well loved, and I will freely gage
My life for their fidelity and truth.

KING.

Thou speakest like a dreamer. This high office
Demands a man — and not a stripling's arm.

CARLOS.

It but demands a human being, father:
And that is what Duke Alva ne'er hath been.

KING.

Terror alone can tie rebellion's hands:
Humanity were madness. Thy soft soul
Is tender, son: they'll tremble at the duke.
Desist from thy request.

CARLOS.

Despatch me, sire,
To Flanders with the army — dare rely
E'en on my tender soul. The name of prince,
The royal name emblazoned on my standard,
Conquers where Alva's butchers but dismay.
Here on my knees I crave it — this the first
Petition of my life. Trust Flanders to me.

KING (*contemplating* CARLOS *with a piercing look*).

Trust my best army to thy thirst for rule,
And put a dagger in my murderer's hand!

CARLOS.

Great God! and is this all — is this the fruit
Of a momentous hour so long desired!
[*After some thought, in a milder tone.*
Oh, speak to me more kindly — send me not
Thus comfortless away — dismiss me not
With this afflicting answer, oh, my father!
Use me more tenderly, indeed, I need it.
This is the last resource of wild despair —
It conquers every power of firm resolve
To bear it as a man — this deep contempt —
My every suit denied: Let me away —
Unheard and foiled in all my fondest hopes,
I take my leave. Now Alva and Domingo
May proudly sit in triumph where your son
Lies weeping in the dust. Your crowd of courtiers,
And your long train of cringing, trembling nobles,
Your tribe of sallow monks, so deadly pale,
All witnessed how you granted me this audience.
Let me not be disgraced. Oh, strike me not
With this most deadly wound — nor lay me bare
To sneering insolence of menial taunts!

"That strangers riot on your bounty, whilst
Carlos, your son, may supplicate in vain."
And as a pledge that you would have me honored,
Despatch me straight to Flanders with the army.

KING.

Urge thy request no farther — as thou wouldst
Avoid the king's displeasure.

CARLOS.

I must brave
My king's displeasure, and prefer my suit
Once more, it is the last. Trust Flanders to me!
I must away from Spain. To linger here
Is to draw breath beneath the headsman's axe:
The air lies heavy on me in Madrid
Like murder on a guilty soul — a change,
An instant change of clime alone can cure me.
If you would save my life, despatch me straight
Without delay to Flanders.

KING (*with affected coldness*).

Invalids,
Like thee, my son — need not be tended close,
And ever watched by the physician's eye —
Thou stayest in Spain — the duke will go to Flanders.

CARLOS (*wildly*).

Assist me, ye good angels!

KING (*starting*).

Hold, what mean
These looks so wild?

CARLOS.

Father, do you abide
Immovably by this determination?

KING.

It was the king's.

CARLOS.

Then my commission's done.
[*Exit in violent emotion.*

Scene III.

King, sunk in gloomy contemplation, walks a few steps up and down; Alva approaches with embarrassment.

KING.

Hold yourself ready to depart for Brussels
Upon a moment's notice.

ALVA.

All is prepared, my liege.

KING.

And your credentials
Lie ready sealed within my cabinet, —
Meanwhile obtain an audience of the queen,
And bid the prince farewell.

ALVA.

As I came in
I met him with a look of frenzy wild
Quitting the chamber; and your majesty
Is strangely moved, methinks, and bears the marks
Of deep excitement — can it be the theme
Of your discourse ——

KING.

Concerned the Duke of Alva.
[*The* King *keeps his eye steadfastly fixed on him.*
I'm pleased that Carlos hates my councillors,
But I'm disturbed that he despises them.
[Alva, *coloring deeply, is about to speak.*
No answer now: propitiate the prince.

ALVA.

Sire!

KING.

Tell me who it was that warned me first
Of my son's dark designs? I listened then
To you, and not to him. I will have proof.
And for the future, mark me, Carlos stands
Nearer the throne — now duke — you may retire.
[*The* King *retires into his cabinet. Exit* Duke *by another door.*

Scene IV.

The antechamber to the Queen's *apartments.* Don Carlos *enters in conversation with a* Page. *The attendants retire at his approach.*

CARLOS.

For me this letter? And a key! How's this?
And both delivered with such mystery!
Come nearer, boy: — from whom didst thou receive them?

PAGE (*mysteriously*).

It seemed to me the lady would be guessed
Rather than be described.

CARLOS (*starting*).

The lady, what!
Who art thou, boy? [*Looking earnestly at the* Page.

PAGE.

A page that serves the queen.

CARLOS (*affrighted, putting his hand to the* Page's *mouth*).

Hold, on your life! I know enough: no more.
[*He tears open the letter hastily, and retires to read it; meanwhile* Duke Alva *comes, and passing the Prince, goes unperceived by him into the* Queen's *apartment,* Carlos *trembles violently and changes color; when he has read the letter he remains a long time speechless, his eyes steadfastly fixed on it; at last he turns to the* Page.

She gave you this herself?

PAGE.

With her own hands.

CARLOS.

She gave this letter to you then herself?
Deceive me not: I ne'er have seen her writing,
And I must credit thee, if thou canst swear it;
But if thy tale be false, confess it straight,
Nor put this fraud on me.

PAGE.

This fraud, on whom?

CARLOS (*looking once more at the letter, then at the* PAGE *with doubt and earnestness*).

Your parents — are they living? and your father —
Serves he the king? Is he a Spaniard born?

PAGE.

He fell a colonel on St. Quentin's field,
Served in the cavalry of Savoy's duke —
His name Alonzo, Count of Henarez.

CARLOS (*taking his hand, and looking fixedly in his eyes*).

The king gave you this letter?

PAGE (*with emotion*).

Gracious prince,
Have I deserved these doubts?

CARLOS (*reading the letter*).

"This key unlocks
The back apartments in the queen's pavilion,
The furthest room lies next a cabinet
Wherein no listener's foot dare penetrate;
Here may the voice of love without restraint
Confess those tender feelings, which till now
The heart with silent looks alone hath spoken.
The timid lover gains an audience here,
And sweet reward repays his secret sorrow."
[*As if awakening from a reverie.*
I am not in a dream, I do not rave, —
This is my right hand, this my sword — and these
Are written words. 'Tis true — it is no dream.
I am beloved, I feel I am beloved.
[*Unable to contain himself, he rushes hastily through the room, and raises his arms to heaven.*

PAGE.

Follow me, prince, and I will lead the way.

CARLOS.

Then let me first collect my scattered thoughts.
The alarm of joy still trembles in my bosom.
Did I e'er lift my fondest hopes so high,
Or trust my fancy to so bold a flight?

Show me the man can learn thus suddenly
To be a god. I am not what I was.
I feel another heaven — another sun
That was not here before. She loves — she loves me!

PAGE (*leading him forward*).

But this is not the place: prince! you forget.

CARLOS.

The king! My father!

[*His arms sink, he casts a timid look around, then collecting himself.*

This is dreadful! Yes,
You're right, my friend. I thank you: I was not
Just then myself. To be compelled to silence,
And bury in my heart this mighty bliss,
Is terrible!

[*Taking the* PAGE *by the hand, and leading him aside.*

Now here! What thou hast seen,
And what not seen, must be within thy breast
Entombed as in the grave. So now depart;
I shall not need thy guidance; they must not
Surprise us here! Now go.

[*The* PAGE *is about to depart.*

Yet hold, a word!

[*The* PAGE *returns.* CARLOS *lays his hand on his shoulder, and looks him steadily in the face.*

A direful secret hast thou in thy keeping,
Which, like a poison of terrific power,
Shivers the cup that holds it into atoms.
Guard every look of thine, nor let thy head
Guess at thy bosom's secret. Be thou like
The senseless speaking-trumpet that receives
And echoes back the voice, but hears it not.
Thou art a boy! Be ever so; continue
The pranks of youth. My correspondent chose
Her messenger of love with prudent skill!
The king will ne'er suspect a serpent here.

PAGE.

And I, my prince, shall feel right proud to know
I am one secret richer than the king.

CARLOS.

Vain, foolish boy! 'tis this should make thee tremble.
Approach me ever with a cold respect:
Ne'er be induced by idle pride to boast
How gracious is the prince! No deadlier sin
Canst thou commit, my son, than pleasing me.
Whate'er thou hast in future for my ear,
Give not to words; intrust not to thy lips,
Ne'er on that common high road of the thoughts
Permit thy news to travel. Speak with an eye,
A finger; I will answer with a look.
The very air, the light, are Philip's creatures,
And the deaf walls around are in his pay.
Some one approaches; fly, we'll meet again.

[*The* QUEEN'S *chamber opens, and* DUKE ALVA *comes out.*

PAGE.

Be careful, prince, to find the right apartment. [*Exit.*

CARLOS.

It is the duke! Fear not, I'll find the way.

SCENE V.

DON CARLOS. DUKE OF ALVA.

ALVA (*meeting him*).

Two words, most gracious prince.

CARLOS.

Some other time. [*Going.*

ALVA.

The place is not the fittest, I confess;
Perhaps your royal highness may be pleased
To grant me audience in your private chamber.

CARLOS.

For what? And why not here? Only be brief.

ALVA.

The special object which has brought me hither,
Is to return your highness lowly thanks
For your good services.

CARLOS.

Thanks! thanks to me —
For what? Duke Alva's thanks!

ALVA.

You scarce had left
His majesty, ere I received in form
Instructions to depart for Brussels.

CARLOS.

What!
For Brussels!

ALVA.

And to what, most gracious prince,
Must I ascribe this favor, but to you —
Your intercession with the king?

CARLOS.

Oh, no!
Not in the least to me; but, duke, you travel,
So Heaven be with your grace!

ALVA.

And is this all?
It seems, indeed, most strange! And has your highness
No further orders, then, to send to Flanders?

CARLOS.

What should I have?

ALVA.

Not long ago, it seemed,
That country's fate required your presence.

CARLOS.

How?
But yes, you're right, — it was so formerly;
But now this change is better as it is.

ALVA.

I am amazed ——

CARLOS.

You are an able general,
No one doubts that — envy herself must own it.
For me, I'm but a youth — so thought the king.

The king was right, quite right. I see it now
Myself, and am content — and so no more.
God speed your journey, as you see, just now
My hands are full, and weighty business presses.
The rest to-morrow, or whene'er you will,
Or when you come from Brussels.

ALVA.

What is this?

CARLOS.

The season favors, and your route will lie
Through Milan, Lorraine. Burgundy, and on
To Germany! What, Germany? Ay, true,
In Germany it was — they know you there.
'Tis April now, May, June, — in July, then,
Just so! or, at the latest, soon in August, —
You will arrive in Brussels, and no doubt
We soon shall hear of your victorious deeds.
You know the way to win our high esteem,
And earn the crown of fame.

ALVA (*significantly*).

Indeed! condemned
By my own conscious insignificance!

CARLOS.

You're sensitive, my lord, and with some cause,
I own it was not fair to use a weapon
Against your grace you were unskilled to wield.

ALVA.

Unskilled!

CARLOS.

'Tis pity I've no leisure now
To fight this worthy battle fairly out:
But at some other time, we ——

ALVA.

Prince, we both
Miscalculate — but still in opposite ways.
You, for example, overrate your age
By twenty years, whilst on the other hand,
I, by as many, underrate it ——

CARLOS.

Well

ALVA.

And this suggests the thought, how many nights
Beside this lovely Lusitanian bride —
Your mother — would the king right gladly give
To buy an arm like this, to aid his crown.
Full well he knows, far easier is the task
To make a monarch than a monarchy;
Far easier too, to stock the world with kings
Than frame an empire for a king to rule.

CARLOS.

Most true, Duke Alva, yet ——

ALVA.

And how much blood,
Your subjects' dearest blood, must flow in streams
Before two drops could make a king of you.

CARLOS.

Most true, by heaven! and in two words comprised,
All that the pride of merit has to urge
Against the pride of fortune. But the moral —
Now, Duke Alva!

ALVA.

Woe to the nursling babe
Of royalty that mocks the careful hand
Which fosters it! How calmly it may sleep
On the soft cushion of our victories!
The monarch's crown is bright with sparkling gems,
But no eye sees the wounds that purchased them.
This sword has given our laws to distant realms,
Has blazed before the banner of the cross,
And in these quarters of the globe has traced
Ensanguined furrows for the seed of faith.
God was the judge in heaven, and I on earth.

CARLOS.

God, or the devil — it little matters which;
Yours was his chosen arm — that stands confessed.
And now no more of this. Some thoughts there are

Whereof the memory pains me. I respect
My father's choice, — my father needs an Alva!
But that he needs him is not just the point
I envy in him: a great man you are,
This may be true, and I well nigh believe it,
Only I fear your mission is begun
Some thousand years too soon. Alva, methinks,
Were just the man to suit the end of time.
Then when the giant insolence of vice
Shall have exhausted Heaven's enduring patience,
And the rich waving harvest of misdeeds
Stand in full ear, and asks a matchless reaper,
Then should you fill the post. O God! my paradise!
My Flanders! But of this I must not think.
'Tis said you carry with you a full store
Of sentences of death already signed.
This shows a prudent foresight! No more need
To fear your foes' designs, or secret plots:
Oh, father! ill indeed I've understood thee.
Calling thee harsh, to save me from a post,
Where Alva's self alone can fitly shine!
'Twas an unerring token of your love.

ALVA.

These words deserve ——

CARLOS.

What!

ALVA.

But your birth protects you.

CARLOS (*seizing his sword*).

That calls for blood! Duke, draw your sword!

ALVA (*slightingly*).

On whom?

CARLOS (*pressing upon him*).

Draw, or I run you through.

ALVA.

Then be it so. [*They fight.*

Scene VI.

The Queen, Don Carlos, Duke Alva.

QUEEN (*coming from her room alarmed*).

How! naked swords?

[*To the* Prince *in an indignant and commanding tone.*

Prince Carlos!

CARLOS (*agitated at the* QUEEN'S *look, drops his arm, stands motionless, then rushes to the* DUKE, *and embraces him.*

Pardon, duke!
Your pardon, sir! Forget, forgive it all!

[*Throws himself in silence at the* Queen's *feet, then rising suddenly, departs in confusion.*

ALVA.

By heaven, 'tis strange!

QUEEN (*remains a few moments as if in doubt, then retiring to her apartment*).

A word with you, Duke Alva.

[*Exit, followed by the* Duke.

Scene VII.

The Princess Eboli's *apartment.*

The Princess *in a simple, but elegant dress, playing on the lute. The* Queen's Page *enters.*

PRINCESS (*starting up suddenly*)

He comes!

PAGE (*abruptly*).

Are you alone? I wonder much
He is not here already; but he must
Be here upon the instant.

PRINCESS.

Do you say must!
Then he will come, this much is certain then.

PAGE.

He's close upon my steps. You are beloved,
Adored, and with more passionate regard
Than mortal ever was, or can be loved.
Oh! what a scene I witnessed!

PRINCESS (*impatiently draws him to her*).

Quick, you spoke
With him! What said he? Tell me straight —
How did he look? what were his words? And say —
Did he appear embarrassed or confused?
And did he guess who sent the key to him?
Be quick! or did he not? He did not guess
At all, perhaps! or guessed amiss! Come, speak,
How! not a word to answer me? Oh, fie!
You never were so dull — so slow before,
'Tis past all patience.

PAGE.

Dearest lady, hear me!
Both key and note I placed within his hands,
In the queen's antechamber, and he started
And gazed with wonder when I told him that
A lady sent me!

PRINCESS.

Did he start? go on!
That's excellent. Proceed, what next ensued?

PAGE.

I would have told him more, but he grew pale,
And snatched the letter from my hand, and said
With look of deadly menace, he knew all.
He read the letter with confusion through,
And straight began to tremble.

PRINCESS.

He knew all!
He knew it all? Were those his very words?

PAGE.

He asked me, and again he asked, if you
With your own hands had given me the letter?

PRINCESS.

If I? Then did he mention me by name?

PAGE.

By name! no name he mentioned: there might be
Listeners, he said, about the palace, who
Might to the king disclose it.

PRINCESS (*surprised*).

Said he that?

PAGE.

He further said, it much concerned the king;
Deeply concerned — to know of that same letter.

PRINCESS.

The king! Nay, are you sure you heard him right?
The king! Was that the very word he used?

PAGE.

It was. He called it a most perilous secret,
And warned me to be strictly on my guard,
Never with word or look to give the king
Occasion for suspicion.

PRINCESS (*after a pause, with astonishment*).

All agrees!
It can be nothing else — he must have heard
The tale — 'tis very strange! Who could have told him,
I wonder who? The eagle eye of love
Alone could pierce so far. But tell me further —
He read the letter.

PAGE.

Which, he said, conveyed
Such bliss as made him tremble, and till then
He had not dared to dream of. As he spoke
The duke, by evil chance, approached the room,
And this compelled us ——

PRINCESS (*angrily*).

What in all the world
Could bring the duke to him at such a time?
What can detain him? Why appears he not?

See how you've been deceived; how truly blest
Might he have been already — in the time
You've taken to describe his wishes to me!

PAGE.

The duke, I fear ——

PRINCESS.

Again, the duke! What can
The duke want here? What should a warrior want
With my soft dreams of happiness? He should
Have left him there, or sent him from his presence.
Where is the man may not be treated thus?
But Carlos seems as little versed in love
As in a woman's heart — he little knows
What minutes are. But hark! I hear a step;
Away, away! [PAGE *hastens out.*
Where have I laid my lute?
I must not seem to wait for him. My song
Shall be a signal to him.

SCENE VIII.

The PRINCESS, DON CARLOS.

The PRINCESS *has thrown herself upon an ottoman, and plays.*

CARLOS (*rushes in; he recognizes the* PRINCESS, *and stands thunderstruck*).

Gracious Heaven!
Where am I?

PRINCESS (*lets her lute fall, and meeting him*).

What? Prince Carlos! yes, in truth,

CARLOS.

Where am I? Senseless error; I have missed
The right apartment.

PRINCESS.

With what dexterous skill
Carlos contrives to hit the very room
Where ladies sit alone!

CARLOS.

Your pardon, princess!
I found — I found the antechamber open.

PRINCESS.

Can it be possible? I fastened it
Myself; at least I thought so——

CARLOS.

Ay! you thought,
You only thought so; rest assured you did not.
You meant to lock it, that I well believe:
But most assuredly it was not locked.
A lute's sweet sounds attracted me, some hand
Touched it with skill; say, was it not a lute?
[*Looking round inquiringly.*
Yes, there it lies, and Heaven can bear me witness
I love the lute to madness. I became
All ear, forgot myself in the sweet strain,
And rushed into the chamber to behold
The lovely eyes of the divine musician
Who charmed me with the magic of her tones.

PRINCESS.

Innocent curiosity, no doubt!
But it was soon appeased, as I can prove.
[*After a short silence, significantly.*
I must respect the modesty that has,
To spare a woman's blushes, thus involved
Itself in so much fiction.

CARLOS (*with sincerity*).

Nay, I feel
I but augment my deep embarrassment,
In vain attempt to extricate myself.
Excuse me for a part I cannot play.
In this remote apartment, you perhaps
Have sought a refuge from the world, to pour
The inmost wishes of your secret heart
Remote from man's distracting eye. By me,
Unhappy that I am, your heavenly dreams
Are all disturbed, and the atonement now
Must be my speedy absence. [*Going.*

PRINCESS (*surprised and confused, but immediately recovering herself*).

Oh! that step
Were cruel, prince, indeed!

CARLOS.

Princess, I feel
What such a look in such a place imports:
This virtuous embarrassment has claims
To which my manhood never can be deaf.
Woe to the wretch whose boldness takes new fire
From the pure blush of maiden modesty!
I am a coward when a woman trembles.

PRINCESS.

Is't possible? — such noble self-control
In one so young, and he a monarch's son!
Now, prince, indeed you shall remain with me,
It is my own request, and you must stay.
Near such high virtue, every maiden fear
Takes wing at once; but your appearance here
Disturbed me in a favorite air, and now
Your penalty shall be to hear me sing it.

CARLOS (*sits down near the* PRINCESS, *not without reluctance*).

A penalty delightful as the sin!
And sooth to say, the subject of the song
Was so divine, again and yet again
I'd gladly hear it.

PRINCESS.

What! you heard it all?
Nay, that was too bad, prince. It was, I think,
A song of love.

CARLOS.

And of successful love,
If I mistake not — dear delicious theme
From those most beauteous lips — but scarce so true,
Methinks, as beautiful.

PRINCESS.

What! not so true?
Then do you doubt the tale?

CARLOS.

I almost doubt
That Carlos and the Princess Eboli,

When they discourse on such a theme as love,
May not quite understand each other's hearts.
[*The* PRINCESS *starts; he observes it, and continues with playful gallantry.*
Who would believe those rosy-tinted cheeks
Concealed a heart torn by the pangs of love.
Is it within the range of wayward chance
That the fair Princess Eboli should sigh
Unheard — unanswered? Love is only known
By him who hopelessly persists in love.

PRINCESS (*with all her former vivacity*).

Hush! what a dreadful thought! this fate indeed
Appears to follow you of all mankind,
Especially to-day.
[*Taking his hand with insinuating interest.*
You are not happy,
Dear prince — you're sad! I know too well you suffer,
And wherefore, prince? When with such loud appeal
The world invites you to enjoy its bliss —
And nature on you pours her bounteous gifts,
And spreads around you all life's sweetest joys.
You, a great monarch's son, and more — far more —
E'en in your cradle with such gifts endowed
As far eclipsed the splendor of your rank.
You, who in those strict courts where women rule,
And pass, without appeal, unerring sentence
On manly worth and honor, even there
Find partial judges. You, who with a look
Can prove victorious, and whose very coldness
Kindles a flame; and who, when warmed with passion,
Can make a paradise, and scatter round
The bliss of heaven, the rapture of the gods.
The man whom nature has adorned with gifts
To render thousands happy, gifts which she
Bestows on few — that such a man as this
Should know what misery is! Thou, gracious Heaven,
That gavest him all those blessings, why deny
Him eyes to see the conquests he has made?

CARLOS (*who has been lost in absence of mind, suddenly recovers himself by the silence of the* PRINCESS, *and starts up*).

Charming! inimitable! Princess, sing
That passage, pray, again.

PRINCESS (*looking at him with astonishment*).

Where, Carlos, were
Your thoughts the while?

CARLOS (*jumps up*).

By heaven, you do remind me
In proper time — I must away — and quickly.

PRINCESS (*holding him back*).

Whither away?

CARLOS.

Into the open air.
Nay, do not hold me, princess, for I feel
As though the world behind me were in flames.

PRINCESS (*holding him forcibly back*).

What troubles you? Whence comes these strange, these wild,
Unnatural looks? Nay, answer me!
[CARLOS *stops to reflect, she draws him to the sofa to her.*
Dear Carlos,
You need repose, your blood is feverish.
Come, sit by me: dispel these gloomy fancies.
Ask yourself frankly can your head explain
The tumult of your heart — and if it can —
Say, can no knight be found in all the court,
No lady, generous as fair, to cure you —
Rather, I should have said, to understand you?
What, no one?

CARLOS (*hastily, without thinking*).

If the Princess Eboli ——

PRINCESS (*delighted, quickly*).

Indeed!

CARLOS.

Would write a letter for me, a few words
Of kindly intercession to my father; ——
They say your influence is great.

PRINCESS.

Who says so?
Ha! was it jealousy that held thee mute! [*Aside.*

CARLOS.

Perchance my story is already public.
I had a sudden wish to visit Brabant
Merely to win my spurs — no more. The king,
Kind soul, is fearful the fatigues of war
Might spoil my singing!

PRINCESS.

Prince, you play me false!
Confess that by this serpent subterfuge
You would mislead me. Look me in the face,
Deceitful one! and say would he whose thoughts
Were only bent on warlike deeds — would he
E'er stoop so low as, with deceitful hand,
To steal fair ladies' ribbons when they drop,
And then — your pardon! hoard them — with such care?
[*With light action she opens his shirt-frill, and seizes a ribbon which is there concealed.*

CARLOS (*drawing back with amazement*).

Nay, princess — that's too much — I am betrayed.
You're not to be deceived. You are in league
With spirits and with demons!

PRINCESS.

Are you then
Surprised at this? What will you wager, Carlos
But I recall some stories to your heart?
Nay, try it with me; ask whate'er you please,
And if the triflings of my sportive fancy —
The sound half-uttered by the air absorbed —
The smile of joy checked by returning gloom ——
If motions — looks from your own soul concealed

Have not escaped my notice — judge if I
Can err when thou wouldst have me understand thee?

CARLOS.

Why, this is boldly ventured; I accept
The wager, princess. Then you undertake
To make discoveries in my secret heart
Unknown even to myself.

PRINCESS (*displeased, but earnestly*).

Unknown to thee!
Reflect a moment, prince! Nay, look around;
This boudoir's not the chamber of the queen,
Where small deceits are practised with full license.
You start, a sudden blush o'erspreads your face.
Who is so bold, so idle, you would ask,
As to watch Carlos when he deems himself
From scrutiny secure? Who was it, then,
At the last palace-ball observed you leave
The queen, your partner, standing in the dance,
And join, with eager haste, the neighboring couple,
To offer to the Princess Eboli
The hand your royal partner should have claimed?
An error, prince, his majesty himself,
Who just then entered the apartment, noticed.

CARLOS (*with ironical smile*).

His majesty? And did he really so?
Of all men he should not have seen it.

PRINCESS.

Nor yet that other scene within the chapel,
Which doubtless Carlos hath long since forgotten.
Prostrate before the holy Virgin's image,
You lay in prayer, when suddenly you heard —
'Twas not your fault — a rustling from behind
Of ladies' dresses. Then did Philip's son,
A youth of hero courage, tremble like
A heretic before the holy office.
On his pale lips died the half-uttered prayer.
In ecstasy of passion, prince — the scene
Was truly touching — for you seized the hand,

The blessed Virgin's cold and holy hand,
And showered your burning kisses on the marble.

CARLOS.

Princess, you wrong me: that was pure devotion!

PRINCESS.

Indeed! that's quite another thing. Perhaps
It was the fear of losing, then, at cards,
When you were seated with the queen and me,
And you with dexterous skill purloined my glove.
[CARLOS *starts surprised.*
That prompted you to play it for a card?

CARLOS.

What words are these? O Heaven, what have I done?

PRINCESS.

Nothing I hope of which you need repent!
How pleasantly was I surprised to find
Concealed within the glove a little note,
Full of the warmest tenderest romance,

CARLOS (*interrupting her suddenly*).

Mere poetry! no more. My fancy teems
With idle bubbles oft, which break as soon
As they arise — and this was one of them;
So, prithee, let us talk of it no more.

PRINCESS (*leaving him with astonishment, and regarding him for some time at a distance.*

I am exhausted — all attempts are vain
To hold this youth. He still eludes my grasp.
[*Remains silent a few moments.*
But stay! Perchance 'tis man's unbounded pride,
That thus to add a zest to my delight.
Assumes a mask of timid diffidence.
'Tis so.
[*She approaches the* PRINCE *again, and looks at him doubtingly.*
Explain yourself, prince, I entreat you.
For here I stand before a magic casket,
Which all my keys are powerless to unlock.

CARLOS.

As I before you stand.

PRINCESS (*leaves him suddenly, walks a few steps up and down in silence, apparently lost in deep thought. After a pause, gravely and solemnly*).

Then thus at last —
I must resolve to speak, and Carlos, you
Shall be my judge. Yours is a noble nature,
You are a prince — a knight — a man of honor.
I throw myself upon your heart — protect me:
Or if I'm lost beyond redemption's power,
Give me your tears in pity for my fate.

[*The* PRINCE *draws nearer.*

A daring favorite of the king demands
My hand — his name Ruy Gomez, Count of Silva,
The king consents — the bargain has been struck,
And I am sold already to his creature.

CARLOS (*with evident emotion*).

Sold! you sold! Another bargain, then,
Concluded by this royal southern trader!

PRINCESS.

No; but hear all — 'tis not enough that I
Am sacrificed to cold state policy,
A snare is laid to entrap my innocence.
Here is a letter will unmask the saint!

[CARLOS *takes the paper, and without reading it listens with impatience to her recital.*

Where shall I find protection, prince? Till now
My virtue was defended by my pride,
At length ——

CARLOS.

At length you yielded! Yielded? No.
For God's sake say not so!

PRINCESS.

Yielded! to whom?
Poor piteous reasoning. Weak beyond contempt
Your haughty minds, who hold a woman's favor,
And love's pure joys, as wares to traffic for!

Love is the only treasure on the face
Of this wide earth that knows no purchaser
Besides itself — love has no price but love.
It is the costly gem, beyond all price,
Which I must freely give away, or — bury
For ever unenjoyed — like that proud merchant
Whom not the wealth of all the rich Rialto
Could tempt — a great rebuke to kings! to save
From the deep ocean waves his matchless pearl,
Too proud to barter it beneath its worth!

CARLOS (*aside*).

Now, by great heaven, this woman's beautiful.

PRINCESS.

Call it caprice or pride, I ne'er will make
Division of my joys. To him, alone,
I choose as mine, I give up all forever.
One only sacrifice I make; but that
Shall be eternal. One true heart alone
My love shall render happy: but that one
I'll elevate to God. The keen delight
Of mingling souls — the kiss — the swimming joys
Of that delicious hour when lovers meet,
The magic power of heavenly beauty — all
Are sister colors of a single ray —
Leaves of one single blossom. Shall I tear
One petal from this sweet, this lovely flower,
With reckless hand, and mar its beauteous chalice?
Shall I degrade the dignity of woman,
The masterpiece of the Almighty's hand,
To charm the evening of a reveller?

CARLOS.

Incredible! that in Madrid should dwell
This matchless creature! and unknown to me
Until this day.

PRINCESS.

Long since had I forsaken
This court — the world — and in some blest retreat
Immured myself; but one tie binds me still
Too firmly to existence. Perhaps — alas!

'Tis but a phantom — but 'tis dear to me.
I love — but am not loved in turn.

CARLOS (*full of ardor, going towards her*).

You are!
As true as God is throned in heaven! I swear
You are — you are unspeakably beloved.

PRINCESS.

You swear it, you! — sure 'twas an angel's voice.
Oh, if you swear it, Carlos, I'll believe it.
Then I am truly loved!

CARLOS (*embracing her with tenderness*).

Bewitching maid,
Thou creature worthy of idolatry!
I stand before thee now all eye, all ear,
All rapture and delight. What eye hath seen thee —
Under yon heaven what eye could e'er have seen thee,
And boast he never loved? What dost thou here
In Philip's royal court! Thou beauteous angel!
Here amid monks and all their princely train.
This is no clime for such a lovely flower —
They fain would rifle all thy sweets — full well
I know their hearts. But it shall never be —
Not whilst I draw life's breath. I fold thee thus
Within my arms, and in these hands I'll bear thee
E'en through a hell replete with mocking fiends.
Let me thy guardian angel prove.

PRINCESS (*with a countenance full of love*).

O Carlos!
How little have I known thee! and how richly
With measureless reward thy heart repays
The weighty task of — comprehending thee!

[*She takes his hand and is about to kiss it.*

CARLOS (*drawing it back*).

Princess! What mean you?

PRINCESS (*with tendernesss and grace, looking at his hand attentively*).

Oh, this beauteous hand!
How lovely 'tis, and rich! This hand has yet

Two costly presents to bestow! — a crown —
And Carlos' heart: — and both these gifts perchance
Upon one mortal! — both on one — Oh, great
And godlike gift — almost too much for one!
How if you share the treasure, prince! A queen
Knows naught of love — and she who truly loves
Cares little for a crown! 'Twere better, prince,
Then to divide the treasure — and at once —
What says my prince? Have you done so already?
Have you in truth? And do I know the blest one?

CARLOS.

Thou shalt. I will unfold myself to thee,
To thy unspotted innocence, dear maid,
Thy pure, unblemished nature. In this court
Thou art the worthiest — first — the only one
To whom this soul has stood revealed. Then, yes!
I will not now conceal it — yes, I love!

PRINCESS.

Oh, cruel heart! Does this avowal prove
So painful to thee? Must I first deserve
Thy pity — ere I hope to win thy love?

CARLOS (*starting*).

What say'st thou?

PRINCESS.

So to trifle with me, prince!
Indeed it was not well — and to deny
The key!

CARLOS.

The key! the key! Oh yes, 'tis so!
[*After a dead silence.*
I see it all too plainly! Gracious heaven!
[*His knees totter, he leans against a chair, and covers his face with his hands. A long silence on both sides. The* PRINCESS *screams and falls.*

PRINCESS.

Oh, horrible! What have I done!

CARLOS.

Hurled down
So far from all my heavenly joys! 'Tis dreadful!

PRINCESS (*hiding her face in the cushion*).

Oh, God! What have I said?

CARLOS (*kneeling before her*).

I am not guilty.
My passion — an unfortunate mistake —
By heaven, I am not guilty ——

PRINCESS (*pushing him from her*).

Out of my sight,
For heaven's sake!

CARLOS.

No, I will not leave thee thus.
In this dread anguish leave thee ——

PRINCESS (*pushing him forcibly away*).

Oh, in pity —
For mercy's sake, away — out of my sight!
Wouldst thou destroy me? How I hate thy presence!
[CARLOS *going.*
Give, give me back the letter and the key.
Where is the other letter?

CARLOS.

The other letter?
What other?

PRINCESS.

That from the king, to me ——

CARLOS (*terrified*).

From whom?

PRINCESS.

The one I just now gave you.

CARLOS.

From the king!
To you!

PRINCESS.

Oh, heavens, how dreadfully have I
Involved myself! The letter, sir! I must
Have it again.

CARLOS.

The letter from the king!
To you!

PRINCESS.

The letter! give it, I implore you
By all that's sacred! give it.

CARLOS.

What, the letter
That will unmask the saint! Is this the letter?

PRINCESS.

Now I'm undone! Quick, give it me ——

CARLOS.

The letter ——

PRINCESS (*wringing her hands in despair*).

What have I done? O dreadful, dire imprudence!

CARLOS.

This letter comes, then, from the king! Princess,
That changes all indeed, and quickly, too.
This letter is beyond all value — priceless!
All Philip's crowns are worthless, and too poor
To win it from my hands. I'll keep this letter.

PRINCESS (*throwing herself prostrate before him as he is going*).

Almighty Heaven! then I am lost forever.

[*Exit* CARLOS.

SCENE IX.

The PRINCESS *alone.*

She seems overcome with surprise, and is confounded. After CARLOS' *departure she hastens to call him back.*

PRINCESS.

Prince, but one word! Prince, hear me. He is gone.
And this, too, I am doomed to bear — his scorn!

And I am left in lonely wretchedness,
Rejected and despised!
[*Sinks down upon a chair. After a pause*—
And yet not so;
I'm but displaced — supplanted by some wanton.
He loves! of that no longer doubt is left;
He has himself confessed it — but my rival —
Who can she be? Happy, thrice happy one!
This much stands clear: he loves where he should not.
He dreads discovery, and from the king
He hides his guilty passion! Why from him
Who would so gladly hail it? Or, is it not
The father that he dreads so in the parent?
When the king's wanton purpose was disclosed,
His features glowed with triumph, boundless joy
Flashed in his eyes, his rigid virtue fled;
Why was it mute in such a cause as this?
Why should he triumph? What hath he to gain
If Philip to his queen ——
[*She stops suddenly, as if struck by a thought, then drawing hastily from her bosom the ribbon which she had taken from* CARLOS, *she seems to recognize it.*
Fool that I am!
At length 'tis plain. Where have my senses been?
My eyes are opened now. They loved each other
Long before Philip wooed her, and the prince
Ne'er saw me but with her! She, she alone
Was in his thoughts when I believed myself
The object of his true and boundless love.
O matchless error! and have I betrayed
My weakness to her? [*Pauses.*
Should his love prove hopeless?
Who can believe it? Would a hopeless love
Persist in such a struggle? Called to revel
In joys for which a monarch sighs in vain!
A hopeless love makes no such sacrifice.
What fire was in his kiss! How tenderly
He pressed my bosom to his beating heart!
Well nigh the trial had proved dangerous
To his romantic, unrequited passion!

With joy he seized the key he fondly thought
The queen had sent: — in this gigantic stride
Of love he puts full credence — and he comes —
In very truth comes here — and so imputes
To Philip's wife a deed so madly rash.
And would he so, had love not made him bold?
'Tis clear as day — his suit is heard — she loves!
By heaven, this saintly creature burns with passion;
How subtle, too, she is! With fear I trembled
Before this lofty paragon of virtue!
She towered beside me, an exalted being,
And in her beams I felt myself eclipsed;
I envied her the lovely, cloudless calm,
That kept her soul from earthly tumults free.
And was this soft serenity but show?
Would she at both feasts revel, holding up
Her virtue's godlike splendor to our gaze,
And riot in the secret joys of vice?
And shall the false dissembler cozen thus,
And win a safe immunity from this ——
That no avenger comes? By heavens she shall not!
I once adored her, — that demands revenge: —
The king shall know her treachery — the king!
[*After a pause.*
'Tis the sure way to win the monarch's ear! [*Exit.*

Scene X.

A chamber in the royal palace.

Duke of Alva, Father Domingo.

DOMINGO.

Something to tell me!

ALVA.

Ay! a thing of moment,
Of which I made discovery to-day,
And I would have your judgment on it.

DOMINGO.

How!
Discovery! To what do you allude?

ALVA.

Prince Carlos and myself this morning met
In the queen's antechamber. I received
An insult from him — we were both in heat —
The strife grew loud — and we had drawn our swords.
Alarmed, from her apartments rushed the queen.
She stepped between us, — with commanding eye
Of conscious power, she looked upon the prince.
'Twas but a single glance, — but his arm dropped,
He fell upon my bosom — gave me then
A warm embrace, and vanished.

DOMINGO (*after a pause*).

This seems strange.
It brings a something to my mind, my lord!
And thoughts like these I own have often sprung
Within my breast; but I avoid such fancies —
To no one have I e'er confided them.
There are such things as double-edged swords
And untrue friends, — I fear them both. 'Tis hard
To judge among mankind, but still more hard
To know them thoroughly. Words slipped at random
Are confidants offended — therefore I
Buried my secret in my breast, till time
Should drag it forth to light. 'Tis dangerous
To render certain services to kings.
They are the bolts, which if they miss the mark,
Recoil upon the archer! I could swear
Upon the sacrament to what I saw.
Yet one eye-witness — one word overheard —
A scrap of paper — would weigh heavier far
Than my most strong conviction! Cursed fate
That we are here in Spain!

ALVA.

And why in Spain?

DOMINGO.

There is a chance in every court but this
For passion to forget itself, and fall.
Here it is warned by ever-wakeful laws.
Our Spanish queens would find it hard to sin —

And only there do they meet obstacles,
Where best 'twould serve our purpose to surprise them.

ALVA.

But listen further: Carlos had to-day
An audience of the king; the interview
Lasted an hour, and earnestly he sought
The government of Flanders for himself.
Loudly he begged, and fervently. I heard him
In the adjoining cabinet. His eyes
Were red with tears when I encountered him.
At noon he wore a look of lofty triumph,
And vowed his joy at the king's choice of me.
He thanked the king. "Matters are changed," he said,
"And things go better now." He's no dissembler:
How shall I reconcile such contradictions?
The prince exults to see himself rejected,
And I receive a favor from the king
With marks of anger! What must I believe?
In truth this new-born dignity doth sound
Much more like banishment than royal favor!

DOMINGO.

And is it come to this at last? to this?
And has one moment crumbled into dust
What cost us years to build? And you so calm,
So perfectly at ease! Know you this youth?
Do you foresee the fate we may expect
Should he attain to power? The prince! No foe
Am I of his. Far other cares than these
Gnaw at my rest — cares for the throne — for God,
And for his holy church! The royal prince —
(I know him, I can penetrate his soul),
Has formed a horrible design, Toledo!
The wild design — to make himself the regent,
And set aside our pure and sacred faith.
His bosom glows with some new-fangled virtue,
Which, proud and self-sufficient, scorns to rest
For strength on any creed. He dares to think!
His brain is all on fire with wild chimeras;
He reverences the people! And is this
A man to be our king?

ALVA.

Fantastic dreams!
No more. A boy's ambition, too, perchance
To play some lofty part! What can he less?
These thoughts will vanish when he's called to rule.

DOMINGO.

I doubt it! Of his freedom he is proud,
And scorns those strict restraints all men must bear
Who hope to govern others. Would he suit
Our throne? His bold gigantic mind
Would burst the barriers of our policy.
In vain I sought to enervate his soul
In the loose joys of this voluptuous age.
He stood the trial. Fearful is the spirit
That rules this youth; and Philip soon will see
His sixtieth year.

ALVA.

Your vision stretches far!

DOMINGO.

He and the queen are both alike in this.
Already works, concealed in either breast,
The poisonous wish for change and innovation.
Give it but way, 'twill quickly reach the throne.
I know this Valois! We may tremble for
The secret vengeance of this quiet foe
If Philip's weakness hearken to her voice!
Fortune so far hath smiled upon us. Now
We must anticipate the foe, and both
Shall fall together in one fatal snare.
Let but a hint of such a thing be dropped
Before the king, proved or unproved, it recks not
Our point is gained if he but waver. We
Ourselves have not a doubt; and once convinced,
'Tis easy to convince another's mind.
Be sure we shall discover more if we
Start with the faith that more remains concealed.

ALVA.

But soft! A vital question! Who is he
Will undertake the task to tell the king?

DOMINGO.

Nor you, nor I! Now shall you learn, what long
My busy spirit, full of its design,
Has been at work with, to achieve its ends.
Still is there wanting to complete our league
A third important personage. The king
Loves the young Princess Eboli — and I
Foster this passion for my own designs.
I am his go-between. She shall be schooled
Into our plot. If my plan fail me not,
In this young lady shall a close ally —
A very queen, bloom for us. She herself
Asked me, but now, to meet her in this chamber.
I'm full of hope. And in one little night
A Spanish maid may blast this Valois lily.

ALVA.

What do you say! Can I have heard aright?
By Heaven! I'm all amazement. Compass this,
And I'll bow down to thee, Dominican!
The day's our own.

DOMINGO.

Soft! Some one comes: 'tis she —
'Tis she herself!

ALVA.

I'm in the adjoining room
If you should ——

DOMINGO.

Be it so: I'll call you in. [*Exit* ALVA.

SCENE XI.

PRINCESS, DOMINGO.

DOMINGO.

At your command, princess.

PRINCESS.

We are perhaps
Not quite alone? [*Looking inquisitively after the* DUKE.
You have, as I observe,
A witness still by you.

DOMINGO.

How?

PRINCESS.

Who was he,
That left your side but now?

DOMINGO.

It was Duke Alva.
Most gracious princess, he requests you will
Admit him to an audience after me.

PRINCESS.

Duke Alva! How? What can he want with me?
You can, perhaps, inform me?

DOMINGO.

I?—and that
Before I learn to what important chance
I owe the favor, long denied, to stand
Before the Princess Eboli once more?
[*Pauses awaiting her answer.*
Has any circumstance occured at last
To favor the king's wishes? Have my hopes
Been not in vain, that more deliberate thought
Would reconcile you to an offer which
Caprice alone and waywardness could spurn?
I seek your presence full of expectation ——

PRINCESS.

Was my last answer to the king conveyed?

DOMINGO.

I have delayed to inflict this mortal wound.
There still is time, it rests with you, princess,
To mitigate its rigor.

PRINCESS.

Tell the king
That I expect him.

DOMINGO.

May I, lovely princess,
Indeed accept this as your true reply?

PRINCESS.

I do not jest. By heaven, you make me tremble!
What have I done to make e'en you grow pale?

DOMINGO.

Nay, lady, this surprise — so sudden — I
Can scarcely comprehend it.

PRINCESS.

Reverend sir!
You shall not comprehend it. Not for all
The world would I you comprehended it.
Enough for you it is so — spare yourself
The trouble to investigate in thought,
Whose eloquence hath wrought this wondrous change
But for your comfort let me add, you have
No hand in this misdeed, — nor has the church.
Although you've proved that cases might arise
Wherein the church, to gain some noble end,
Might use the persons of her youthful daughters!
Such reasonings move not me; such motives, pure,
Right reverend sir, are far too high for me.

DOMINGO.

When they become superfluous, your grace,
I willingly retract them.

PRINCESS.

Seek the king,
And ask him as from me, that he will not
Mistake me in this business. What I have been
That am I still. 'Tis but the course of things
Has changed. When I in anger spurned his suit,
I deemed him truly happy in possessing
Earth's fairest queen. I thought his faithful wife
Deserved my sacrifice. I thought so then,
But now I'm undeceived.

DOMINGO.

Princess, go on!
I hear it all — we understand each other.

PRINCESS.

Enough. She is found out. I will not spare her.
The hypocrite's unmasked! She has deceived
The king, all Spain, and me. She loves, I know
She loves! I can bring proofs that will make you tremble.
The king has been deceived — but he shall not,
By heaven, go unrevenged! The saintly mask
Of pure and superhuman self-denial
I'll tear from her deceitful brow, that all
May see the forehead of the shameless sinner.
'Twill cost me dear, but here my triumph lies,
That it will cost her infinitely more.

DOMINGO.

Now all is ripe, let me call in the duke.

[*Goes out.*

PRINCESS (*astonished*).

What means all this?

Scene XII.

The Princess, Duke Alva, Domingo.

DOMINGO (*leading the* DUKE *in*).

Our tidings, good my lord,
Come somewhat late. The Princess Eboli
Reveals to us a secret we had meant
Ourselves to impart to her.

ALVA.

My visit, then,
Will not so much surprise her, but I never
Trust my own eyes in these discoveries.
They need a woman's more discerning glance.

PRINCESS.

Discoveries! How mean you?

DOMINGO.

Would we knew
What place and fitter season you ——

PRINCESS.

Just so!
To-morrow noon I will expect you both.
Reasons I have why this clandestine guilt
Should from the king no longer be concealed.

ALVA.

'Tis this that brings us here. The king must know it
And he shall hear the news from you, princess,
From you alone: — for to what tongue would he
Afford such ready credence as to yours,
Friend and companion ever of his spouse?

DOMINGO.

As yours, who more than any one at will
Can o'er him exercise supreme command.

ALVA.

I am the prince's open enemy.

DOMINGO.

And that is what the world believes of me.
The Princess Eboli's above suspicion.
We are compelled to silence, but your duty,
The duty of your office, calls on you
To speak. The king shall not escape our hands.
Let your hints rouse him, we'll complete the work.

ALVA.

It must be done at once, without delay;
Each moment now is precious. In an hour
The order may arrive for my departure.

DOMINGO (*after a short pause, turns to the* PRINCESS).

Cannot some letters be discovered? Truly,
An intercepted letter from the prince
Would work with rare effect. Ay! let me see ——
Is it not so? You sleep, princess, I think,
In the same chamber with her majesty?

PRINCESS.

The next to hers. But of what use is that?

DOMINGO.

Oh, for some skill in locks! Have you observed
Where she is wont to keep her casket key?

PRINCESS (*in thought*).

Yes, that might lead to something; yes, I think
The key is to be found.

DOMINGO.

Letters, you know,
Need messengers. Her retinue is large;
Who do you think could put us on the scent?
Gold can do much.

ALVA.

Can no one tell us whether
The prince has any trusty confidant?

DOMINGO.

Not one; in all Madrid not one.

ALVA.

That's strange!

DOMINGO.

Rely on me in this. He holds in scorn
The universal court. I have my proofs.

ALVA.

Stay! It occurs to me, as I was leaving
The queen's apartments, I beheld the prince
In private conference with a page of hers.

PRINCESS (*suddenly interrupting*).

O no! that must have been of something else.

DOMINGO.

Could we not ascertain the fact? It seems
Suspicious. [*To the* DUKE.
Did you know the page, my lord!

PRINCESS.

Some trifle; what else could it be? Enough,
I'm sure of that. So we shall meet again
Before I see the king; and by that time
We may discover much.

DOMINGO (*leading her aside*).

What of the king?
Say, may he hope? May I assure him so?
And the entrancing hour which shall fulfil
His fond desires, what shall I say of that?

PRINCESS.

In a few days I will feign sickness, and
Shall be excused from waiting on the queen.
Such is, you know, the custom of the court,
And I may then remain in my apartment.

DOMINGO.

'Tis well devised! Now the great game is won,
And we may bid defiance to all queens!

PRINCESS.

Hark! I am called. I must attend the queen,
So fare you well. [*Exit.*

Scene XIII.

ALVA *and* DOMINGO.

DOMINGO (*after a pause, during which he has watched the* PRINCESS).

My lord! these roses, and ——
Your battles ——

ALVA.

And your God — why, even so!
Thus we'll await the lightning that shall scathe us!
[*Exeunt.*

Scene XIV.

A Carthusian Convent.

DON CARLOS *and the* PRIOR.

CARLOS (*to the* PRIOR, *as he comes in*).

Been here already? I am sorry for it.

PRIOR.

Yes, thrice since morning. 'Tis about an hour
Since he went hence.

CARLOS.

But he will sure return.
Has he not left some message?

PRIOR.

Yes; he promised
To come again at noon.

CARLOS (*going to a window, and looking round the country*).

Your convent lies
Far from the public road. Yonder are seen
The turrets of Madrid — just so — and there
The Mansanares flows. The scenery is
Exactly to my wish, and all around
Is calm and still as secrecy itself.

PRIOR.

Or as the entrance to another world.

CARLOS.

Most worthy sir, to your fidelity
And honor, have I now intrusted all
I hold most dear and sacred in the world.
No mortal man must know, or even suspect,
With whom I here hold secret assignation.
Most weighty reasons prompt me to deny,
To all the world, the friend whom I expect,
Therefore I choose this convent. Are we safe
From traitors and surprise? You recollect
What you have sworn.

PRIOR.

Good sir, rely on us.
A king's suspicion cannot pierce the grave,
And curious ears haunts only those resorts
Where wealth and passion dwell — but from these walls
The world's forever banished.

CARLOS.

You may think,
Perhaps, beneath this seeming fear and caution
There lies a guilty conscience?

PRIOR.

I think nothing.

CARLOS.

If you imagine this, most holy father,
You err — indeed you err. My secret shuns
The sight of man — but not the eye of God.

PRIOR.

Such things concern us little. This retreat
To guilt, and innocence alike, is open,
And whether thy designs be good or ill,
Thy purpose criminal or virtuous, — that
We leave to thee to settle with thy heart.

CARLOS (*with warmth*).

Our purpose never can disgrace your God.
'Tis his own noblest work. To you indeed,
I may reveal it.

PRIOR.

To what end, I pray?
Forego, dear prince, this needless explanation.
The world and all its troubles have been long
Shut from my thoughts — in preparation for
My last long journey. Why recall them to me
For the brief space that must precede my death?
'Tis little for salvation that we need —
But the bell rings, and summons me to prayer.

[*Exit* PRIOR.

SCENE XV.

DON CARLOS; *the* MARQUIS POSA *enters.*

CARLOS.

At length once more, — at length ——

MARQUIS.

Oh, what a trial
For the impatience of a friend! The sun
Has risen twice — twice set — since Carlos' fate
Has been resolved, and am I only now
To learn it: speak, — you're reconciled!

CARLOS.

With whom?

MARQUIS.

The king! And Flanders, too, — its fate is settled!

CARLOS.

The duke sets out to-morrow. That is fixed

MARQUIS.

That cannot be — it is not surely so.
Can all Madrid be so deceived? 'Tis said
You had a private audience, and the king ——

CARLOS.

Remained inflexible, and we are now
Divided more than ever.

MARQUIS.

Do you go
To Flanders?

CARLOS.

No!

MARQUIS.

Alas! my blighted hopes!

CARLOS.

Of this hereafter. Oh, Roderigo! since
We parted last, what have I not endured?
But first thy counsel? I must speak with her!

MARQUIS.

Your mother? No! But wherefore?

CARLOS.

I have hopes ——
But you turn pale! Be calm — I should be happy.
And I shall be so: but of this anon —
Advise me now, how I may speak with her.

MARQUIS.

What mean you? What new feverish dream is this?

CARLOS.

By the great God of wonders 'tis no dream!
'Tis truth, reality ——
[*Taking out the* KING'S *letter to the* PRINCESS EBOLI
Contained in this
Important paper —yes, the queen is free, —
Free before men and in the eyes of heaven;
There read, and cease to wonder at my words.

MARQUIS (*opening the letter*).

What do I here behold? The king's own hand!
[*After he has read it.*
To whom addressed?

CARLOS.

To Princess Eboli.
Two days ago, a page who serves the queen,
Brought me, from unknown hands, a key and letter,
Which said that in the left wing of the palace,
Where the queen lodges, lay a cabinet, —
That there a lady whom I long had loved
Awaited me. I straight obeyed the summons.

MARQUIS.

Fool! madman! you obeyed it ——

CARLOS.

Not that I
The writing knew; but there was only one
Such woman, who could think herself adored
By Carlos. With delight intoxicate
I hastened to the spot. A heavenly song,
Re-echoing from the innermost apartment,
Served me for guide. I reached the cabinet —
I entered and beheld — conceive my wonder!

MARQUIS.

I guess it all ——

CARLOS.

I had been lost forever,
But that I fell into an angel's hands!
She, hapless chance, by my imprudent looks,
Deceived, had yielded to the sweet delusion

And deemed herself the idol of my soul.
Moved by the silent anguish of my breast,
With thoughtless generosity, her heart
Nobly determined to return my love;
Deeming respectful fear had caused my silence,
She dared to speak, and all her lovely soul
Laid bare before me.

MARQUIS.

And with calm composure,
You tell this tale! The Princess Eboli
Saw through your heart; and doubtless she has pierced
The inmost secret of your hidden love.
You've wronged her deeply, and she rules the king.

CARLOS (*confidently*).

But she is virtuous!

MARQUIS.

She may be so
From love's mere selfishness. But much I fear
Such virtue — well I know it: know how little
It hath the power to soar to that ideal,
Which, first conceived in sweet and stately grace,
From the pure soul's maternal soil, puts forth
Spontaneous shoots, nor asks the gardener's aid
To nurse its lavish blossoms into life.
'Tis but a foreign plant, with labor reared,
And warmth that poorly imitates the south,
In a cold soil and an unfriendly clime.
Call it what name you will — or education,
Or principle, or artificial virtue ——
Won from the heat of youth by art and cunning,
In conflicts manifold — all noted down
With scrupulous reckoning to that heaven's account,
Which is its aim, and will requite its pains.
Ask your own heart! Can she forgive the queen
That you should scorn her dearly-purchased virtue,
To pine in hopeless love for Philip's wife.

CARLOS.

Knowest thou the princess, then, so well?

MARQUIS.

Not I —
I've scarcely seen her twice. And yet thus much
I may remark. To me she still appears
To shun alone the nakedness of vice,
Too weakly proud of her imagined virtue.
And then I mark the queen. How different, Carlos,
Is everything that I behold in her!
In native dignity, serene and calm,
Wearing a careless cheerfulness — unschooled
In all the trained restraints of conduct, far
Removed from boldness and timidity,
With firm, heroic step, she walks along
The narrow middle path of rectitude,
Unconscious of the worship she compels,
Where she of self-approval never dreamed.
Say, does my Carlos in this mirror trace
The features of his Eboli? The princess
Was constant while she loved; love was the price,
The understood condition of her virtue.
You failed to pay that price — 'twill therefore fall.

CARLOS (*with warmth*).

No, no! [*Hastily pacing the apartment.*
I tell thee, no! And, Roderigo,
Ill it becomes thee thus to rob thy Carlos
Of his high trust in human excellence,
His chief, his dearest joy!

MARQUIS.

Deserve I this?
Friend of my soul, this would I never do —
By heaven I would not. Oh, this Eboli!
She were an angel to me, and before
Her glory would I bend me prostrate down,
In reverence deep as thine, if she were not
The mistress of thy secret.

CARLOS.

See how vain,
How idle are thy fears! What proofs has she
That will not stamp her maiden brow with shame?

Say, will she purchase with her own dishonor
The wretched satisfaction of revenge?

MARQUIS.

Ay! to recall a blush, full many a one
Has doomed herself to infamy.

CARLOS (*with increased vehemence*).

Nay, that
Is far too harsh — and cruel! She is proud
And noble; well I know her, and fear nothing.
Vain are your efforts to alarm my hopes.
I must speak to my mother.

MARQUIS.

Now? for what?

CARLOS.

Because I've nothing more to care for now.
And I must know my fate. Only contrive
That I may speak with her.

MARQUIS.

And wilt thou show
This letter to her?

CARLOS.

Question me no more,
But quickly find the means that I may see her.

MARQUIS (*significantly*).

Didst thou not tell me that thou lov'st thy mother?
And wouldst thou really show this letter to her?
[CARLOS *fixes his eyes on the ground, and remains silent.*
I read a something, Carlos, in thy looks
Unknown to me before. Thou turn'st thine eyes
Away from me. Then it is true, and have I
Judged thee aright? Here, let me see that paper.
[CARLOS *gives him the letter, and the* MARQUIS *tears it.*

CARLOS.

What! art thou mad? [*Moderating his warmth.*
In truth — I must confess it, —
That letter was of deepest moment to me.

MARQUIS.

So it appeared: on that account I tore it.

[*The* MARQUIS *casts a penetrating look on the* PRINCE, *who surveys him with doubt and surprise. A long silence.*

Now speak to me with candor, Carlos. What
Have desecrations of the royal bed
To do with thee — thy love? Dost thou fear Philip?
How are a husband's violated duties
Allied with thee and thy audacious hopes?
Has he sinned there, where thou hast placed thy love?
Now then, in truth, I learn to comprehend thee —
How ill till now I've understood thy love!

CARLOS.

What dost thou think, Roderigo?

MARQUIS.

Oh, I feel
From what it is that I must wean myself.
Once it was otherwise! Yes, once thy soul
Was bounteous, rich, and warm, and there was room
For a whole world in thy expanded heart.
Those feelings are extinct — all swallowed up
In one poor, petty, selfish passion. Now
Thy heart is withered, dead! No tears hast thou
For the unhappy fate of wretched Flanders —
No, not another tear. Oh, Carlos! see
How poor, how beggarly, thou hast become,
Since all thy love has centered in thyself!

CARLOS (*flings himself into a chair. After a pause, with scarcely suppressed tears*).

Too well I know thou lovest me no more!

MARQUIS.

Not so, my Carlos. Well I understand
This fiery passion: 'tis the misdirection
Of feelings pure and noble in themselves.
The queen belonged to thee: the king, thy father,
Despoiled thee of her — yet till now thou hast
Been modestly distrustful of thy claims.

Philip, perhaps, was worthy of her! Thou
Scarce dared to breathe his sentence in a whisper—
This letter has resolved thy doubts, and proved
Thou art the worthier man. With haughty joy
Thou saw'st before thee rise the doom that waits
On tyranny convicted of a theft,
But thou wert proud to be the injured one:
Wrongs undeserved great souls can calmly suffer,
Yet here thy fancy played thee false: thy pride
Was touched with satisfaction, and thy heart
Allowed itself to hope: I plainly saw
This time, at least, thou didst not know thyself.

CARLOS (*with emotion*).

Thou'rt wrong, Roderigo; for my thoughts were far
Less noble than thy goodness would persuade me.

MARQUIS.

And am I then e'en here so little known?
See, Carlos, when thou errest, 'tis my way,
Amid a hundred virtues, still to find
That one to which I may impute thy fall.
Now, then, we understand each other better,
And thou shalt have an audience of the queen.

CARLOS (*falling on his neck*).

Oh, how I blush beside thee!

MARQUIS.

Take my word,
And leave the rest to me. A wild, bold thought,
A happy thought is dawning in my mind;
And thou shalt hear it from a fairer mouth,
I hasten to the queen. Perhaps to-morrow
Thy wish may be achieved. Till then, my Carlos,
Forget not this — "That a design conceived
Of lofty reason, which involves the fate,
The sufferings of mankind, though it be baffled
Ten thousand times, should never be abandoned."
Dost hear? Remember Flanders.

CARLOS.

Yes! all, all
That thou and virtue bid me not forget.

MARQUIS (*going to a window*).

The time is up — I hear thy suite approaching.
[*They embrace.*
Crown prince again, and vassal.

CARLOS.

Dost thou go
Straight to Madrid?

MARQUIS.

Yes, straight.

CARLOS.

Hold! one word more.
How nearly it escaped me! Yet 'twas news
Of deep importance. "Every letter now
Sent to Brabant is opened by the king!"
So be upon thy guard. The royal post
Has secret orders.

MARQUIS.

How have you learned this?

CARLOS.

Don Raymond Taxis is my trusty friend.

MARQUIS (*after a pause*).

Well! then they may be sent through Germany.
[*Exeunt on different sides.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The king's bedchamber. On the toilet two burning lights. In the background several pages asleep resting on their knees. The KING, *in half undress, stands before the table, with one arm bent over the chair, in a reflecting posture. Before him is a medallion and papers.*

KING.

Of a warm fancy she has ever been!
Who can deny it? I could never love her,
Yet has she never seemed to miss my love.
And so 'tis plain — she's false!
[*Makes a movement which brings him to himself. He looks round with surprise.*

Where have I been?
Is no one watching here, then, save the king?
The light's burnt out, and yet it is not day.
I must forego my slumbers for to-night.
Take it, kind nature, for enjoyed! No time
Have monarchs to retrieve the nights they lose.
I'm now awake, and day it shall be.

[*He puts out the candles, and draws aside the window-curtain. He observes the sleeping pages — remains for some time standing before them — then rings a bell.*

All
Asleep within the antechamber, too?

Scene II.

The King, Count Lerma.

LERMA (*surprised at seeing the* KING).

Does not your majesty feel well?

KING.

The left
Pavilion of the palace was in flames:
Did you not hear the alarum?

LERMA.

No, my liege.

KING.

No! What? And did I only dream it then?
'Twas surely real! Does not the queen sleep there?

LERMA.

She does, your majesty.

KING.

This dream affrights me!
In future let the guards be doubled there
As soon as it grows dark. Dost hear? And yet
Let it be done in secret. I would not ——
Why do you gaze on me?

LERMA.

Your bloodshot eyes,
I mark, that beg repose. Dare I remind

My liege of an inestimable life,
And of your subjects, who with pale dismay
Would in such features read of restless nights?
But two brief hours of morning sleep would——

KING (*with troubled look*).

Sleep!
Shall I find sleep within the Escurial?
Let the king sleep, and he may lose his crown,
The husband, his wife's heart. But no! not so;
This is but slander. Was it not a woman
Whispered the crime to me? Woman, thy name
Is calumny? The deed I'll hold unproved,
Until a man confirms the fatal truth!
[*To the pages, who in the meanwhile have awaked.*
Summon Duke Alva! [*Pages go.*
Count, come nearer to me.
[*Fixes a searching look on the* COUNT.
Is all this true? Oh for omniscience now,
Though but so long as a man's pulse might beat.
Is it true? Upon your oath! Am I deceived?

LERMA.

My great, my best of kings!

KING (*drawing back*).

King! naught but king!
And king again! No better answer than
Mere hollow echo! When I strike this rock
For water, to assuage my burning thirst,
It gives me molten gold.

LERMA.

What true, my liege?

KING.

Oh, nothing, nothing! Leave me! Get thee gone!
[*The* COUNT *going, the* KING *calls him back again.*
Say, are you married? and are you a father?

LERMA.

I am, your majesty.

KING.

What! married — yet
You dare to watch a night here with your king!
Your hair is gray, and yet you do not blush
To think your wife is honest. Get thee home;
You'll find her locked, this moment, in your son's
Incestuous embrace. Believe your king.
Now go; you stand amazed; you stare at me
With searching eye, because of my gray hairs.
Unhappy man, reflect. Queens never taint
Their virtue thus: doubt it, and you shall die!

LERMA (*with warmth*).

Who dare do so? In all my monarch's realms
Who has the daring hardihood to breathe
Suspicion on her angel purity?
To slander thus the best of queens ——

KING.

The best!
The best, from you, too! She has ardent friends,
I find, around. It must have cost her much —
More than methinks she could afford to give.
You are dismissed; now send the duke to me.

LERMA.

I hear him in the antechamber. [*Going.*

KING (*with a milder tone*).

Count,
What you observed is very true. My head
Burns with the fever of this sleepless night!
What I have uttered in this waking dream,
Mark you, forget! I am your gracious king!
[*Presents his hand to kiss. Exit* LERMA, *opening the door at the same time to* DUKE ALVA.

SCENE III.

The KING *and* DUKE ALVA.

ALVA (*approaching the* KING *with an air of doubt*).

This unexpected order, at so strange

An hour! [*Starts on looking closer at the* KING.
And then those looks!

KING (*has seated himself, and taken hold of the medallion on the table. Looks at the* DUKE *for some time in silence.*

And is it true
I have no faithful servant!

ALVA.

How?

KING.

A blow
Aimed at my life in its most vital part!
Full well 'twas known, yet no one warned me of it.

ALVA (*with a look of astonishment*).

A blow aimed at your majesty! and yet
Escape your Alva's eye?

KING (*showing him letters*).

Know you this writing?

ALVA.

It is the prince's hand.

KING (*a pause — watches the* DUKE *closely*).

Do you suspect
Then nothing? Often have you cautioned me
'Gainst his ambition. Was there nothing more
Than his ambition should have made me tremble?

ALVA.

Ambition is a word of largest import,
And much it may comprise.

KING.

And had you naught
Of special purport to disclose?

ALVA (*after a pause, mysteriously*).

Your majesty
Hath given the kingdom's welfare to my charge:
On this my inmost, secret thoughts are bent,

And my best vigilance. Beyond this charge
What I may think, suspect, or know belongs
To me alone. These are the sacred treasures
Which not the vassal only, but the slave,
The very slave, may from a king withhold.
Not all that to my mind seems plain is yet
Mature enough to meet the monarch's ear.
Would he be answered — then must I implore
He will not question as a king.

KING (*handing the letters*).

Read these.

ALVA (*reads them, and turns to the* KING *with a look of terror*).

Who was the madman placed these fatal papers
In my king's hands?

KING.

You know, then, who is meant?
No name you see is mentioned in the paper.

ALVA (*stepping back confused*).

I was too hasty!

KING.

But you know!

ALVA (*after some consideration*).

'Tis spoken!
The king commands, — I dare not now conceal.
I'll not deny it — I do know the person.

KING (*starting up in violent emotion*).

God of revenge! inspire me to invent
Some new, unheard-of torture! Is their crime
So clear, so plain, so public to the world,
That without e'en the trouble of inquiry
The veriest hint suffices to reveal it?
This is too much! I did not dream of this!
I am the last of all, then, to discern it —
The last in all my realm?

ALVA (*throwing himself at the* KING'S *feet*).

Yes, I confess
My guilt, most gracious monarch. I'm ashamed
A coward prudence should have tied my tongue
When truth, and justice, and my sovereign's honor
Urged me to speak. But since all else are silent
And since the magic spell of beauty binds
All other tongues, I dare to give it voice;
Though well I know a son's warm protestations,
A wife's seductive charms and winning tears ——

KING (*suddenly with warmth*).

Rise, Alva! thou hast now my royal promise;
Rise, and speak fearlessly!

ALVA (*rising*).

Your majesty,
Perchance, may bear in your remembrance still
What happened in the garden at Aranjuez.
You found the queen deserted by her ladies,
With looks confused — alone, within a bower, ——

KING.

Proceed. What further have I yet to hear?

ALVA.

The Marchioness of Mondecar was banished
Because she boldly sacrificed herself
To save the queen! It has been since discovered
She did no more than she had been commanded.
Prince Carlos had been there.

KING (*starting*).

The prince! What more?

ALVA.

Upon the ground the footsteps of a man
Were traced, till finally they disappeared
Close to a grotto, leftward of the bower,
Where lay a handkerchief the prince had dropped.
This wakened our suspicions. But besides,
The gardener met the prince upon the spot, —
Just at the time, as near as we can guess,
Your majesty appeared within the walk.

KING (*recovering from gloomy thought*).

And yet she wept when I but seemed to doubt!
She made me blush before the assembled court,
Blush to my very self! By heaven! I stood
In presence of her virtue, like a culprit.
[*A long and deep silence. He sits down and hides his face.*
Yes, Alva, you are right! All this may lead
To something dreadful — leave me for a moment ——

ALVA.

But, gracious sire, all this is not enough ——

KING (*snatching up the papers*).

Nor this, nor this? — nor all the harmony
Of these most damning proofs? 'Tis clear as day —
I knew it long ago — their heinous guilt
Began when first I took her from your hands,
Here in Madrid. I think I see her now,
With look of horror, pale as midnight ghost,
Fixing her eyes upon my hoary hair!
'Twas then the treacherous game began!

ALVA.

The prince,
In welcoming a mother — lost his bride!
Long had they nursed a mutual passion, long
Each other's ardent feelings understood,
Which her new state forbade her to indulge.
The fear which still attends love's first avowal
Was long subdued. Seduction, bolder grown,
Spoke in those forms of easy confidence
Which recollections of the past allowed.
Allied by harmony of souls and years,
And now by similar restraints provoked,
They readily obeyed their wild desires.
Reasons of state opposed their early union —
But can it, sire, be thought she ever gave
To the state council such authority?
That she subdued the passion of her soul
To scrutinize with more attentive eye

The election of the cabinet. Her heart
Was bent on love, and won a diadem.

KING (*offended, and with bitterness*).

You are a nice observer, duke, and I
Admire your eloquence. I thank you truly.
[*Rising coldly and haughtily.*
But you are right. The queen has deeply erred
In keeping from me letters of such import,
And in concealing the intrusive visit
The prince paid in the garden: — from a false
Mistaken honor she has deeply erred
And I shall question further. [*Ringing the bell.*
Who waits now
Within the antechamber? You, Duke Alva,
I need no longer. Go.

ALVA.

And has my zeal
A second time displeased your majesty?

KING (*to a page who enters*).

Summon Domingo. Duke, I pardon you
For having made me tremble for a moment,
With secret apprehension, lest yourself
Might fall a victim to a foul misdeed. [*Exit* ALVA.

SCENE IV.

The KING, DOMINGO.

KING *walks up and down the room to collect his thoughts.*

DOMINGO (*after contemplating the* KING *for some time with a respectful silence*).

How joyfully surprised I am to find
Your majesty so tranquil and collected.

KING.

Surprised!

DOMINGO.

And heaven be thanked my fears were groundless!
Now may I hope the best.

KING.

Your fears! What feared you?

DOMINGO.

I dare not hide it from your majesty
That I had learned a secret ——

KING (*gloomily*).

And have I
Expressed a wish to share your secret with you?
Who ventures to anticipate me thus?
Too forward, by mine honor!

DOMINGO.

Gracious monarch!
The place, the occasion, seal of secrecy
'Neath which I learned it — free me from this charge.
It was intrusted to me at the seat
Of penitence — intrusted as a crime
That deeply weighed upon the tender soul
Of the fair sinner who confessed her guilt,
And sought the pardon of offended heaven.
Too late the princess weeps a foul misdeed
That may involve the queen herself in ruin.

KING.

Indeed! Kind soul! You have correctly guessed
The occasion of your summons. You must guide me
Through this dark labyrinth wherein blind zeal
Has tangled me. From you I hope for truth.
Be candid with me; what must I believe,
And what determine? From your sacred office
I look for strictest truth.

DOMINGO.

And if, my liege,
The mildness ever incident to this
My holy calling, did not such restraint
Impose upon me, still I would entreat
Your majesty, for your own peace of mind,
To urge no further this discovery,
And cease forever to pursue a secret
Which never can be happily explained.

All that is yet discovered may be pardoned.
Let the king say the word — and then the queen
Has never sinned. The monarch's will bestows
Virtue and fortune, both with equal ease.
And the king's undisturbed tranquillity
Is, in itself, sufficient to destroy
The rumors set on foot by calumny.

KING.

What! Rumors! and of me! among my subjects!

DOMINGO.

All falsehood, sire! Naught but the vilest falsehood!
I'll swear 'tis false! Yet what's believed by all,
Groundless and unconfirmed although it be,
Works its effect, as sure as truth itself.

KING.

Not in this case, by heaven!

DOMINGO.

A virtuous name
Is, after all, my liege, the only prize
Which queens and peasants' wives contest together.

KING.

For which I surely have no need to tremble.
[*He looks doubtingly at* DOMINGO. *After a pause.*
Priest, thou hast something fearful to impart.
Delay it not. I read it plainly stamped
In thy ill-boding looks. Then out with it,
Whate'er it be. Let me no longer tremble
Upon the rack. What do the people say?

DOMINGO.

The people, sire, are liable to err,
Nay err assuredly. What people think
Should not alarm the king. Yet that they should
Presume so far as to indulge such thoughts ——

KING.

Why must I beg this poisonous draught so long?

DOMINGO.

The people often muse upon that month
Which brought your majesty so near the grave,
From that time, thirty weeks had scarce elapsed,
Before the queen's delivery was announced.
[*The* KING *rises and rings the bell.* DUKE ALVA *enters.* DOMINGO *alarmed.*
I am amazed, your majesty!

KING (*going towards* ALVA).

Toledo!
You are a man — defend me from this priest!

DOMINGO (*he and* DUKE ALVA *exchange embarrassed looks After a pause*).

Could we have but foreseen that this occurrence
Would be avenged upon its mere relater.

KING.

Said you a bastard? I had scarce, you say,
Escaped the pangs of death when first she felt
She should, in nature's time, become a mother.
Explain how this occurred! 'Twas then, if I
Remember right, that you, in every church,
Ordered devotions to St. Dominick,
For the especial wonder he vouchsafed.
On one side or the other, then, you lie!
What would you have me credit? Oh, I see
Full plainly through you now! If this dark plot
Had then been ripe your saint had lost his fame.

ALVA.

This plot?

KING.

How can you with a harmony
So unexampled in your very thoughts
Concur, and not have first conspired together?
Would you persuade me thus? Think you that I
Perceived not with what eagerness you pounced
Upon your prey? With what delight you fed
Upon my pain, — my agony of grief?
Full well I marked the ardent, burning zeal

With which the duke forestalled the mark of grace
I destined for my son. And how this priest
Presumed to fortify his petty spleen
With my wrath's giant arm! I am, forsooth,
A bow which each of you may bend at pleasure
But I have yet a will. And if I needs
Must doubt — perhaps I may begin with you.

ALVA.

Reward like this our truth did ne'er expect.

KING.

Your truth! Truth warns of apprehended danger.
'Tis malice that speaks only of the past.
What can I gain by your officiousness?
Should your suspicion ripen to full truth,
What follows but the pangs of separation,
The melancholy triumphs of revenge?
But no: you only fear — you feed me with
Conjectures vague. To hell's profound abyss
You lead me on, then flee yourself away.

DOMINGO.

What other proofs than these are possible,
When our own eyes can scarcely trust themselves?

KING (*after a long pause, turning earnestly and solemnly towards* DOMINGO).

The grandees of the realm shall be convened,
And I will sit in judgment. Then step forth
In front of all, if you have courage for it,
And charge her as a strumpet. She shall die —
Die without mercy — and the prince, too, with her!
But mark me well: if she but clear herself
That doom shall fall on you. Now, dare you show
Honor to truth by such a sacrifice?
Determine. No, you dare not. You are silent.
Such is the zeal of liars!

ALVA (*who has stood at a distance, answers coldly and calmly*).

I will do it.

KING (*turns round with astonishment and looks at the* DUKE *for a long time without moving*).

That's boldly said! But thou hast risked thy life
In stubborn conflicts for far less a prize.
Has risked it with a gamester's recklessness —
For honor's empty bubble. What is life
To thee? I'll not expose the royal blood
To such a madman's power, whose highest hope
Must be to yield his wretched being up
With some renown. I spurn your offer. Go;
And wait my orders in the audience chamber.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

The KING *alone.*

Now give me, gracious Providence! a man.
Thou'st given me much already. Now vouchsafe me
A man! for thou alone canst grant the boon.
Thine eye doth penetrate all hidden things
Oh! give me but a friend: for I am not
Omniscient like to thee. The ministers
Whom thou hast chosen for me thou dost know —
And their deserts: and as their merits claim,
I value them. Their subjugated vices,
Coerced by rein severe, serve all my ends,
As thy storms purify this nether world.
I thirst for truth. To reach its tranquil spring,
Through the dark heaps of thick surrounding error,
Is not the lot of kings. Give me the man,
So rarely found, of pure and open heart,
Of judgment clear, and eye unprejudiced,
To aid me in the search. I cast the lots.
And may I find that man, among the thousands
Who flutter in the sunshine of a court.

[*He opens an escritoire and takes out a portfolio After turning over the leaves a long time.*

Nothing but names, mere names are here: — no note
E'en of the services to which they owe
Their place upon the roll! Oh, what can be
Of shorter memory than gratitude!

Here, in this other list, I read each fault
Most accurately marked. That is not well!
Can vengeance stand in need of such a help?
[*He reads further.*
Count Egmont! What doth he here? Long ago
The victory of St. Quentin is forgotten.
I place him with the dead.
[*He effaces this name and writes it on the other roll after he has read further.*
The Marquis Posa!
The Marquis Posa! I can scarce recall
This person to mind. And doubly marked!
A proof I destined him for some great purpose.
How is it possible? This man, till now,
Has ever shunned my presence — still has fled
His royal debtor's eye? The only man,
By heaven, within the compass of my realm,
Who does not court my favor. Did he burn
With avarice, or ambition, long ago
He had appeared before my throne. I'll try
This wondrous man. He who can thus dispense
With royalty will doubtless speak the truth.

Scene VI.

The Audience Chamber.

Don Carlos *in conversation with the* Prince of Parma. Dukes Alva, Feria, *and* Medina Sidonia, Count Lerma, *and other* Grandees, *with papers in their hands, awaiting the* King.

MEDINA SIDONIA (*seems to be shunned by all the* GRANDEES, *turns towards* DUKE ALVA, *who, alone and absorbed in himself, walks up and down*).

Duke, you have had an audience of the king?
How did you find him minded?

ALVA.

Somewhat ill
For you, and for the news you bring.

MEDINA SIDONIA.

My heart
Was lighter 'mid the roar of English cannon
Than here on Spanish ground.

[CARLOS, *who had regarded him with silent sympathy, now approaches him and presses his hand.*

My warmest thanks,
Prince, for this generous tear. You may perceive
How all avoid me. Now my fate is sealed.

CARLOS.

Still hope the best both from my father's favor,
And your own innocence.

MEDINA SIDONIA.

Prince, I have lost
A fleet more mighty than e'er ploughed the waves.
And what is such a head as mine to set
'Gainst seventy sunken galleons? And therewith
Five hopeful sons! Alas! that breaks my heart.

SCENE VII.

The KING *enters from his chamber, attired. The former all uncover and make room on both sides, while they form a semicircle round him. Silence.*

KING (*rapidly surveying the whole circle*).

Be covered, all.

[DON CARLOS *and the* PRINCE OF PARMA *approach first and kiss the* KING'S *hand: he turns with friendly mien to the latter, taking no notice of his son.*

Your mother, nephew, fain
Would be informed what favor you have won
Here in Madrid.

PARMA.

That question let her ask
When I have fought my maiden battle, sire.

KING.

Be satisfied; your turn will come at last,
When these old props decay.

[*To the* DUKE OF FERIA.

What brings you here?

FERIA (*kneeling to the* KING).

The master, sire, of Calatrava's order
This morning died. I here return his cross.

KING (*takes the order and looks round the whole circle*).

And who is worthiest after him to wear it?

[*He beckons to* DUKE ALVA, *who approaches and bends on one knee. The* KING *hangs the order on his neck.*

You are my ablest general! Ne'er aspire
To more, and, duke, my favors shall not fail you.

[*He perceives the* DUKE *of* MEDINA SIDONIA.

My admiral!

MEDINA SIDONIA.

And here you see, great king,
All that remains of the Armada's might,
And of the flower of Spain.

KING (*after a pause*).

God rules above us!
I sent you to contend with men, and not
With rocks and storms. You're welcome to Madrid.

[*Extending his hand to him to kiss.*

I thank you for preserving in yourself
A faithful servant to me. For as such
I value him, my lords; and 'tis my will
That you should honor him.

[*He motions him to rise and cover himself, then turns to the others.*

What more remains?

[*To* DON CARLOS *and the* PRINCE OF PARMA.

Princes, I thank you.

[*They retire; the other* GRANDEES *approach, and kneeling, hand their papers to the* KING. *He looks over them rapidly, and hands them to* DUKE ALVA.

Duke, let these be laid
Before me in the council. Who waits further?

[*No one answers.*

How comes it that amidst my train of nobles
The Marquis Posa ne'er appears? I know

This Marquis Posa served me with distinction.
Does he still live? Why is he not among you?

LERMA.

The chevalier is just returned from travel,
Completed through all Europe. He is now
Here in Madrid, and waits a public day
To cast himself before his sovereign's feet.

ALVA.

The Marquis Posa? Right, he is the same
Bold Knight of Malta, sire, of whom renown
Proclaims this gallant deed. Upon a summons
Of the Grand Master, all the valiant knights
Assembled in their island, at that time
Besieged by Soliman. This noble youth,
Scarce numbering eighteen summers, straightway fled
From Alcala, where he pursued his studies,
And suddenly arrived at La Valette.
"This Cross," he said, "was bought for me; and now
To prove I'm worthy of it." He was one
Of forty knights who held St. Elmo's Castle,
At midday, 'gainst Piali, Ulucciali,
And Mustapha, and Hassem; the assault
Being thrice repeated. When the castle fell,
And all the valiant knights were killed around him,
He plunged into the ocean, and alone
Reached La Valette in safety. Two months after
The foe deserts the island, and the knight
Returned to end his interrupted studies.

FERIA.

It was the Marquis Posa, too, who crushed
The dread conspiracy in Catalonia;
And by his marked activity preserved
That powerful province to the Spanish crown.

KING.

I am amazed! What sort of man is this
Who can deserve so highly, yet awake
No pang of envy in the breasts of three
Who speak his praise? The character he owns

Must be of noble stamp indeed, or else
A very blank. I'm curious to behold
This wondrous man. [*To* DUKE ALVA.
Conduct him to the council
When mass is over.
[*Exit* DUKE. *The* KING *calls* FERIA.
And do you preside
Here in my place. [*Exit.*

FERIA.

The king is kind to-day.

MEDINA SIDONIA.

Call him a god! So he has proved to me!

FERIA.

You well deserve your fortune, admiral!
You have my warmest wishes.

ONE OF THE GRANDEES.

Sir, and mine.

A SECOND.

And also mine!

A THIRD.

My heart exults with joy—
So excellent a general!

THE FIRST.

The king
Showed you no kindness, 'twas your strict desert.

LERMA (*to* MEDINA SIDONIA, *taking leave*).

Oh, how two little words have made your fortune!
[*Exeunt all.*

SCENE VIII.

The KING'S *Cabinet.*

MARQUIS POSA *and* DUKE ALVA.

MARQUIS (*as he enters*).

Does he want me? What, me? Impossible!
You must mistake the name. What can he want
With me?

ALVA.

To know you.

MARQUIS.

Curiosity!
No more; and I regret the precious minutes
That I must lose: time passes swiftly by.

ALVA.

I now commend you to your lucky stars.
The king is in your hands. Employ this moment
To your own best advantage; for, remember,
If it is lost, you are alone to blame.

Scene IX.

The Marquis *alone.*

MARQUIS.

Duke, 'tis well spoken! Turn to good account
The moment which presents itself but once!
Truly this courtier reads a useful lesson:
If not in his sense good, at least in mine.
[*Walks a few steps backwards and forwards.*
How came I here? Is it caprice or chance
That shows me now my image in this mirror?
Why, out of millions, should it picture me —
The most unlikely — and present my form
To the king's memory? Was this but chance?
Perhaps 'twas something more! — what else is chance
But the rude stone which from the sculptor's hand
Receives its life? Chance comes from Providence,
And man must mould it to his own designs.
What the king wants with me but little matters;
I know the business I shall have with him.
Were but one spark of truth with boldness flung
Into the despot's soul, how fruitful 'twere
In the kind hand of Providence; and so
What first appeared capricious act of chance,
May be designed for some momentous end.
Whate'er it be, I'll act on this belief.
[*He takes a few turns in the room, and stands at last in tranquil contemplation before a painting. The*

KING *appears in the neighboring room, where he gives some orders. He then enters and stands motionless at the door, and contemplates the* MARQUIS *for some time without being observed.*

SCENE X.

The KING, *and* MARQUIS POSA.

The MARQUIS, *as soon as he observes the* KING, *comes forward and sinks on one knee; then rises and remains standing before him without any sign of confusion.*

KING (*looks at him with surprise*).

We've met before then?

MARQUIS.

No.

KING.

You did my crown
Some service? Why then do you shun my thanks?
My memory is thronged with suitor's claims.
One only is omniscient. 'Twas your duty
To seek your monarch's eye! Why did you not?

MARQUIS.

Two days have scarce elapsed since my return
From foreign travel, sire.

KING.

I would not stand
Indebted to a subject; ask some favor ——

MARQUIS.

I enjoy the laws.

KING.

So does the murderer!

MARQUIS.

Then how much more the honest citizen!
My lot contents me, sire.

KING (*aside*).

By heavens! a proud
And dauntless mind! That was to be expected.
Proud I would have my Spaniards. Better far
The cup should overflow than not be full.
They say you've left my service?

MARQUIS.

To make way
For some one worthier, I withdrew.

KING.

'Tis pity.
When spirits such as yours make holiday,
The state must suffer. But perchance you feared
To miss the post best suited to your merits.

MARQUIS.

Oh, no! I doubt not the experienced judge,
In human nature skilled — his proper study, —
Will have discovered at a glance wherein
I may be useful to him, wherein not.
With deepest gratitude, I feel the favor
Wherewith, by so exalted an opinion,
Your majesty is loading me; and yet —— [*He pauses.*

KING.

You hesitate?

MARQUIS.

I am, I must confess,
Sire, at this moment, unprepared to clothe
My thoughts, as the world's citizen, in phrase
Beseeming to your subject. When I left
The court forever, sire, I deemed myself
Released from the necessity to give
My reasons for this step.

KING.

Are they so weak?
What do you fear to risk by their disclosure?

MARQUIS.

My life at farthest, sire, — were time allowed
For me to weary you — but this denied —

Then truth itself must suffer. I must choose
'Twixt your displeasure and contempt. And if
I must decide, I rather would appear
Worthy of punishment than pity.

KING (*with a look of expectation*).

Well?

MARQUIS.

I cannot be the servant of a prince.

[*The* KING *looks at him with astonishment.*

I will not cheat the buyer. Should you deem
Me worthy of your service, you prescribe
A course of duty for me; you command
My arm in battle and my head in council.
Then, not my actions, but the applause they meet
At court becomes their object. But for me
Virtue possesses an intrinsic worth.
I would, myself, create that happiness
A monarch, with my hand, would seek to plant,
And duty's task would prove an inward joy,
And be my willing choice. Say, like you this?
And in your own creation could you bear
A new creator? For I ne'er could stoop
To be the chisel where I fain would be
The sculptor's self. I dearly love mankind,
My gracious liege, but in a monarchy
I dare not love another than myself.

KING.

This ardor is most laudable. You wish
To do good deeds to others; how you do them
Is but of small account to patriots,
Or to the wise. Choose then within these realms
The office where you best may satisfy
This noble impulse.

MARQUIS.

'Tis not to be found.

KING.

How!

MARQUIS.

What your majesty would spread abroad,
Through these my hands — is it the good of men?
Is it the happiness that my pure love
Would to mankind impart? Before such bliss
Monarchs would tremble. No! Court policy
Has raised up new enjoyments for mankind.
Which she is always rich enough to grant;
And wakened, in the hearts of men, new wishes
Which such enjoyments only can content.
In her own mint she coins the truth — such truth!
As she herself can tolerate: all forms
Unlike her own are broken. But is that
Which can content the court enough for me?
Must my affection for my brother pledge
Itself to work my brother injury?
To call him happy when he dare not think?
Sire, choose not me to spread the happiness
Which you have stamped for us. I must decline
To circulate such coin. I cannot be
The servant of a prince.

KING (*suddenly*).

You are, perhaps,
A Protestant?

MARQUIS (*after some reflection*).

Our creeds, my liege, are one.
[*A pause.*
I am misunderstood. I feared as much.
You see the veil torn by my hand aside
From all the mysteries of majesty.
Who can assure you I shall still regard
As sacred that which ceases to alarm me?
I may seem dangerous, because I think
Above myself. I am not so, my liege;
My wishes lie corroding here. The rage
[*Laying his hand on his breast.*
For innovation, which but serves to increase
The heavy weight of chains it cannot break,
Shall never fire my blood! The world is yet

Unripe for my ideal; and I live
A citizen of ages yet to come.
But does a fancied picture break your rest?
A breach of yours destroys it.

KING.

Say, am I
The first to whom your views are known?

MARQUIS.

You are.

KING (*rises, walks a few paces and then stops opposite the* MARQUIS — *aside*).

This tone, at least, is new; but flattery
Exhausts itself. And men of talent still
Disdain to imitate. So let us test
Its opposite for once. Why should I not?
There is a charm in novelty. Should we
Be so agreed, I will bethink me now
Of some new state employment, in whose duties
Your powerful mind ——

MARQUIS.

Sire, I perceive how small,
How mean, your notions are of manly worth.
Suspecting, in an honest man's discourse,
Naught but a flatterer's artifice — methinks
I can explain the cause of this your error.
Mankind compel you to it. With free choice
They have disclaimed their true nobility,
Lowered themselves to their degraded state.
Before man's inward worth, as from a phantom,
They fly in terror — and contented with
Their poverty, they ornament their chains
With slavish prudence; and they call it virtue
To bear them with a show of resignation.
Thus did you find the world, and thus it was
By your great father handed o'er to you.
In this debased conection — how could you
Respect mankind?

KING.

Your words contain some truth.

MARQUIS.

Alas! that when from the Creator's hand
You took mankind, and moulded him to suit
Your own ideas, making yourself the god
Of this new creature, you should overlook
That you yourself remained a human being —
A very man, as from God's hands you came.
Still did you feel a mortal's wants and pains.
You needed sympathy ; but to a God
One can but sacrifice, and pray, and tremble —
Wretched exchange! Perversion most unblest
Of sacred nature! Once degrade mankind,
And make him but a thing to play upon,
Who then can share the harmony with you?

KING (*aside*).

By heaven, he moves me!

MARQUIS.

But this sacrifice
To you is valueless. You thus become
A thing apart, a species of your own.
This is the price you pay for being a god;
'Twere dreadful were it not so, and if you
Gained nothing by the misery of millions!
And if the very freedom you destroyed
Were the sole blessing that could make you happy.
Dismiss me, sire, I pray you ; for my theme
Bears me too far; my heart is full; too strong
The charm, to stand before the only man
To whom I may reveal it.

[*The* COUNT LERMA *enters, and whispers a few words to the* KING, *who signs him to withdraw, and continues sitting in his former posture.*

KING (*to the* MARQUIS, *after* LERMA *is gone*).

Nay, continue.

MARQUIS (*after a pause*).

I feel, sire — all the worth ——

KING.

Proceed; you had
Yet more to say to me.

MARQUIS.

Your majesty,
I lately passed through Flanders and Brabant,
So many rich and blooming provinces,
Filled with a valiant, great, and honest people.
To be the father of a race like this
I thought must be divine indeed; and then
I stumbled on a heap of burnt men's bones.
[*He stops, he fixes a penetrating look on the* KING, *who endeavors to return his glance; but he looks on the ground, embarrassed and confused.*
True, you are forced to act so; but that you
Could dare fulfil your task — this fills my soul
With shuddering horror! Oh, 'tis pity that
The victim, weltering in his blood, must cease
To chant the praises of his sacrificer!
And that mere men — not beings loftier far —
Should write the history of the world. But soon
A milder age will follow that of Philip,
An age of truer wisdom; hand in hand,
The subjects' welfare and the sovereign's greatness
Will walk in union. Then the careful state
Will spare her children, and necessity
No longer glory to be thus inhuman.

KING.

When, think you, would that blessed age arrive,
If I had shrunk before the curse of this?
Behold my Spain, see here the burgher's good
Blooms in eternal and unclouded peace.
A peace like this will I bestow on Flanders.

MARQUIS (*hastily*).

The churchyard's peace! And do you hope to end
What you have now begun? Say, do you hope
To check the ripening change of Christendom,
The universal spring, that shall renew
The earth's fair form? Would you alone, in Europe,
Fling yourself down before the rapid wheel
Of destiny, which rolls its ceaseless course,
And seize its spokes with human arm. Vain thought!

Already thousands have your kingdom fled
In joyful poverty: the honest burgher
For his faith exiled, was your noblest subject!
See! with a mother's arms, Elizabeth
Welcomes the fugitives, and Britain blooms
In rich luxuriance, from our country's arts.
Bereft of the new Christian's industry,
Granada lies forsaken, and all Europe
Exulting, sees his foe oppressed with wounds,
By its own hands inflicted!

[*The* KING *is moved; the* MARQUIS *observes it, and advances a step nearer.*

You would plant
For all eternity, and yet the seeds
You sow around you are the seeds of death!
This hopeless task, with nature's laws at strife,
Will ne'er survive the spirit of its founder.
You labor for ingratitude; in vain,
With nature you engage in desperate struggle —
In vain you waste your high and royal life
In projects of destruction. Man is greater
Than you esteem him. He will burst the chains
Of a long slumber, and reclaim once more
His just and hallowed rights. With Nero's name,
And fell Busiris', will he couple yours;
And — ah! you once deserved a better fate.

KING.

How know you that?

MARQUIS.

In very truth you did —
Yes, I repeat it — by the Almighty power!
Restore us all you have deprived us of,
And, generous as strong, let happiness
Flow from your horn of plenty — let man's mind
Ripen in your vast empire — give us back
All you have taken from us — and become,
Amidst a thousand kings, a king indeed!

[*He advances boldly, and fixes on him a look of earnestness and enthusiasm.*

Oh, that the eloquence of all those myriads,

Whose fate depends on this momentous hour,
Could hover on my lips, and fan the spark
That lights thine eye into a glorious flame!
Renounce the mimicry of godlike powers
Which level us to nothing. Be, in truth,
An image of the Deity himself!
Never did mortal man possess so much
For purpose so divine. The kings of Europe
Pay homage to the name of Spain. Be you
The leader of these kings. One pen-stroke now,
One motion of your hand, can new create
The earth! but grant us liberty of thought.

[*Casts himself at his feet.*

KING (*surprised, turns away his face, then again looks towards the* MARQUIS).

Enthusiast most strange! arise; but I ——

MARQUIS.

Look round on all the glorious face of nature,
On freedom it is founded — see how rich,
Through freedom it has grown. The great Creator
Bestows upon the worm its drop of dew,
And gives free-will a triumph in abodes
Where lone corruption reigns. See your creation,
How small, how poor! The rustling of a leaf
Alarms the mighty lord of Christendom.
Each virtue makes you quake with fear. While he,
Not to disturb fair freedom's blest appearance,
Permits the frightful ravages of evil
To waste his fair domains. The great Creator
We see not — he conceals himself within
His own eternal laws. The sceptic sees
Their operation, but beholds not Him.
"Wherefore a God!" he cries, "the world itself
Suffices for itself!" And Christian prayer
Ne'er praised him more than doth this blasphemy.

KING.

And will you undertake to raise up this
Exalted standard of weak human nature
In my dominions?

MARQUIS.

You can do it, sire.
Who else? Devote to your own people's bliss
The kingly power, which has too long enriched
The greatness of the throne alone. Restore
The prostrate dignity of human nature,
And let the subject be, what once he was,
The end and object of the monarch's care,
Bound by no duty, save a brother's love.
And when mankind is to itself restored,
Roused to a sense of its own innate worth,
When freedom's lofty virtues proudly flourish —
Then, sire, when you have made your own wide realms
The happiest in the world, it then may be
Your duty to subdue the universe.

KING (*after a long pause*).

I've heard you to the end. Far differently
I find, than in the minds of other men,
The world exists in yours. And you shall not
By foreign laws be judged. I am the first
To whom you have your secret self disclosed;
I know it — so believe it — for the sake
Of this forbearance — that you have till now
Concealed these sentiments, although embraced
With so much ardor, — for this cautious prudence.
I will forget, young man, that I have learned them,
And how I learned them. Rise! I will confute
Your youthful dreams by my matured experience,
Not by my power as king. Such is my will,
And therefore act I thus. Poison itself
May, in a worthy nature, be transformed
To some benignant use. But, sir, beware
My Inquisition! 'Twould afflict me much ——

MARQUIS.

Indeed!

KING (*lost in surprise*).

Ne'er met I such a man as that!
No, marquis, no! you wrong me! Not to you
Will I become a Nero — not to you! —

All happiness shall not be blasted round me,
And you at least, beneath my very eyes,
May dare continue to remain a man.

MARQUIS (*quickly*).

And, sire, my fellow-subjects? Not for me,
Nor my own cause, I pleaded. Sire! your subjects ——

KING.

Nay, if you know so well how future times
Will judge me, let them learn at least from you,
That when I found a man, I could respect him.

MARQUIS.

Oh, let not the most just of kings at once
Be the most unjust! In your realm of Flanders
There are a thousand better men than I.
But you — sire! may I dare to say so much —
For the first time, perhaps, see liberty
In milder form portrayed.

KING (*with gentle severity*).

No more of this,
Young man! You would, I know, think otherwise
Had you but learned to understand mankind
As I. But truly — I would not this meeting
Should prove our last. How can I hope to win you?

MARQUIS.

Pray leave me as I am. What value, sire,
Should I be to you were you to corrupt me?

KING.

This pride I will not bear. From this day forth
I hold you in my service. No remonstrance —
For I will have it so. [*After a pause.*
But how is this?
What would I now? Was it not truth I wished?
But here is something more. Marquis, so far
You've learned to know me as a king; but yet
You know me not as man —

[*The* MARQUIS *seems to meditate.*

I understand you —
Were I the most unfortunate of fathers,
Yet as a husband may I not be blest?

MARQUIS.

If the possession of a hopeful son,
And a most lovely spouse, confer a claim
On mortal to assume that title, sire,
In both respects, you are supremely blest.

KING (*with a serious look*).

That am I not — and never, till this hour,
Have I so deeply felt that I am not so.
[*Contemplating the* MARQUIS *with a look of melancholy.*

MARQUIS.

The prince possesses a right noble mind.
I ne'er have known him otherwise.

KING.

I have!
The treasure he has robbed me of, no crown
Can e'er requite. So virtuous a queen!

MARQUIS.

Who dare assert it, sire?

KING.

The world! and scandal!
And I myself! Here lie the damning proofs
Of doubtless guilt — and others, too, exist,
From which I fear the worst. But still 'tis hard
To trust one proof alone. Who brings the charge?
And oh! if this were possible — that she,
The queen, so foully could pollute her honor,
Then how much easier were it to believe
An Eboli may be a slanderer!
Does not that priest detest my son and her?
And can I doubt that Alva broods revenge?
My wife has higher worth than all together,

MARQUIS.

And there exists besides in woman's soul
A treasure, sire, beyond all outward show,
Above the reach of slander — female virtue!

KING.

Marquis! those thoughts are mine. It costs too much
To sink so low as they accuse the queen.
The sacred ties of honor are not broken
With so much ease, as some would fain persuade me.
Marquis, you know mankind. Just such a man
As you I long have wished for — you are kind —
Cheerful — and deeply versed in human nature —
Therefore I've chosen you ——

MARQUIS (*surprised and alarmed*).

Me, sire!

KING.

You stand
Before your king and ask no special favor —
For yourself nothing! — that is new to me —
You will be just — ne'er weakly swayed by passion.
Watch my son close — search the queen's inmost heart.
You shall have power to speak with her in private.
Retire. [*He rings a bell.*

MARQUIS.

And if with but one hope fulfilled
I now depart, then is this day indeed
The happiest of my life.

KING (*holds out his hand to him to kiss*).

I hold it not
Amongst my days a lost one.

[*The* MARQUIS *rises and goes.* COUNT LERMA *enters.*

Count, in future,
The marquis is to enter, unannounced,

ACT IV.

Scene I.

The Queen's Apartment.

Queen, Duchess Olivarez, Princess Eboli, Countess Fuentes.

QUEEN (*to the first lady as she rises*).

And so the key has not been found! My casket
Must be forced open then — and that at once.
[*She observes* Princess Eboli, *who approaches and kisses her hand.*
Welcome, dear princess! I rejoice to see you
So near recovered. But you still look pale.

FUENTES (*with malice*).

The fault of that vile fever which affects
The nerves so painfully. Is't not, princess?

QUEEN.

I wished to visit you, dear Eboli,
But dared not.

OLIVAREZ.

Oh! the Princess Eboli
Was not in want of company.

QUEEN.

Why, that
I readily believe, but what's the matter?
You tremble ——

PRINCESS.

Nothing — nothing, gracious queen.
Permit me to retire.

QUEEN.

You hide it from us —
And are far worse than you would have us think.
Standing must weary you. Assist her, countess,
And let her rest awhile upon that seat.

PRINCESS (*going*).

I shall be better in the open air.

QUEEN.

Attend her, countess. What a sudden illness!
[*A* PAGE *enters and speaks to the* DUCHESS, *who then addresses the* QUEEN.

OLIVAREZ.

The Marquis Posa waits, your majesty,
With orders from the king.

QUEEN.

Admit him then.
[PAGE *admits the* MARQUIS *and exit.*

SCENE II.

MARQUIS POSA. *The former.*

The MARQUIS *falls on one knee before the* QUEEN, *who signs to him to rise.*

QUEEN.

What are my lord's commands? And may I dare
Thus publicly to hear ——

MARQUIS.

My business is
In private with your royal majesty.
[*The ladies retire on a signal from the* QUEEN.

SCENE III.

The QUEEN, MARQUIS POSA.

QUEEN (*full of astonishment*).

How! Marquis, dare I trust my eyes? Are you
Commissioned to me from the king?

MARQUIS.

Does this
Seem such a wonder to your majesty?
To me 'tis otherwise.

QUEEN.

The world must sure
Have wandered from its course! That you and he —
I must confess ——

MARQUIS.

It does sound somewhat strange —
But be it so. The present times abound
In prodigies.

QUEEN.

But none can equal this.

MARQUIS.

Suppose I had at last allowed myself
To be converted, and had weary grown
Of playing the eccentric at the court
Of Philip. The eccentric! What is that?
He who would be of service to mankind
Must first endeavor to resemble them.
What end is gained by the vain-glorious garb
Of the sectarian? Then suppose — for who
From vanity is so completely free
As for his creed to seek no proselytes?
Suppose, I say, I had it in my mind
To place my own opinions on the throne!

QUEEN.

No, marquis! no! Not even in jest could I
Suspect you of so wild a scheme as this;
No visionary you! to undertake
What you can ne'er accomplish.

MARQUIS.

But that seems
To be the very point at issue.

QUEEN.

What
I chiefly blame you, marquis, for, and what
Could well estrange me from you — is ——

MARQUIS.

Perhaps
Duplicity!

QUEEN.

At least — a want of candor.
Perhaps the king himself has no desire
You should impart what now you mean to tell me.

MARQUIS.

No.

QUEEN.

And can evil means be justified
By honest ends? And — pardon me the doubt —
Can your high bearing stoop to such an office?
I scarce can think it.

MARQUIS.

Nor, indeed, could I,
Were my sole purpose to deceive the king.
'Tis not my wish — I mean to serve him now
More honestly than he himself commands.

QUEEN.

'Tis spoken like yourself. Enough of this —
What would the king?

MARQUIS.

The king? I can, it seems,
Retaliate quickly on my rigid judge:
And what I have deferred so long to tell,
Your majesty, perhaps, would willingly
Longer defer to hear. But still it must
Be heard. The king requests your majesty
Will grant no audience to the ambassador
Of France to-day. Such were my high commands —
They're executed.

QUEEN.

Marquis, is that all
You have to tell me from him?

MARQUIS.

Nearly all
That justifies me thus to seek your presence.

QUEEN.

Well, marquis, I'm contented not to hear
What should, perhaps, remain a secret from me.

MARQUIS.

True, queen! though were you other than yourself,
I should inform you straight of certain things —
Warn you of certain men — but this to you
Were a vain office. Danger may arise
And disappear around you, unperceived.
You will not know it — of too little weight
To chase the slumber from your angel brow.
But 'twas not this, in sooth, that brought me hither,
Prince Carlos ——

QUEEN.

What of him? How have you left him?

MARQUIS.

E'en as the only wise man of his time,
In whom it is a crime to worship truth —
And ready, for his love to risk his life,
As the wise sage for his. I bring few words —
But here he is himself.

[*Giving the* QUEEN *a letter.*

QUEEN (*after she has read it*).

He says he must
Speak with me ——

MARQUIS.

So do I.

QUEEN.

And will he thus
Be happy — when he sees with his own eyes,
That I am wretched?

MARQUIS.

No; but more resolved,
More active.

QUEEN.

How?

MARQUIS.

Duke Alva is appointed
To Flanders.

QUEEN.

Yes, appointed — so I hear.

MARQUIS.

The king cannot retract: — we know the king.
This much is clear, the prince must not remain
Here in Madrid, nor Flanders be abandoned.

QUEEN.

And can you hinder it?

MARQUIS.

Perhaps I can,
But then the means are dangerous as the evil —
Rash as despair — and yet I know no other.

QUEEN.

Name them.

MARQUIS.

To you, and you alone, my queen,
Will I reveal them; for from you alone,
Carlos will hear them named without a shudder.
The name they bear is somewhat harsh.

QUEEN.

Rebellion!

MARQUIS.

He must prove faithless to the king, and fly
With secrecy to Brussels, where the Flemings
Wait him with open arms. The Netherlands
Will rise at his command. Our glorious cause
From the king's son will gather matchless strength,
The Spanish throne shall tremble at his arms,
And what his sire denied him in Madrid,
That will he willingly concede in Brussels.

QUEEN.

You've spoken with the king to-day — and yet
Maintain all this.

MARQUIS.

Yes, I maintain it all,
Because I spoke with him.

QUEEN (*after a pause*).

The daring plan
Alarms and pleases me. You may be right—
The thought is bold, and that perhaps enchants me.
Let it but ripen. Does Prince Carlos know it?

MARQUIS.

It was my wish that he should hear it first
From your own lips.

QUEEN.

The plan is doubtless good,
But then the prince's youth ——

MARQUIS.

No disadvantage!
He there will find the bravest generals
Of the Emperor Charles — an Egmont and an Orange—
In battle daring, and in council wise.

QUEEN (*with vivacity*).

True — the design is grand and beautiful!
The prince must act; I feel it sensibly.
The part he's doomed to play here in Madrid
Has bowed me to the dust on his account.
I promise him the aid of France and Savoy;
I think with you, lord marquis — he must act —
But this design needs money ——

MARQUIS.

It is ready.

QUEEN.

I, too, know means.

MARQUIS.

May I then give him hopes
Of seeing you?

QUEEN.

I will consider it.

MARQUIS.

The prince, my queen, is urgent for an answer.
I promised to procure it.

[*Presenting his writing tablet to the* QUEEN.

Two short lines
Will be enough.

QUEEN (*after she has written*).
When do we meet again?

MARQUIS.
Whene'er you wish.

QUEEN.
Whene'er I wish it, marquis!
How can I understand this privilege?

MARQUIS.
As innocently, queen, as e'er you may.
But we enjoy it — that is sure enough.

QUEEN (*interrupting*).
How will my heart rejoice should this become
A refuge for the liberties of Europe,
And this through him! Count on my silent aid!

MARQUIS (*with animation*).
Right well I knew your heart would understand me.
[*The* DUCHESS OLIVAREZ *enters.*

QUEEN (*coldly to the* MARQUIS).
My lord! the king's commands I shall respect
As law. Assure him of the queen's submission.
[*She makes a sign to him. Exit* MARQUIS.

SCENE IV.

A Gallery.

DON CARLOS, COUNT LERMA.

CARLOS.
Here we are undisturbed. What would you now
Impart to me?

LERMA.
Your highness has a friend
Here at the court.

CARLOS (*starting*).
A friend! I knew it not!
But what's your meaning?

LERMA.

I must sue for pardon
That I am learned in more than I should know.
But for your highness' comfort I've received it
From one I may depend upon — in short,
I have it from myself.

CARLOS.

Whom speak you of?

LERMA.

The Marquis Posa.

CARLOS.

What!

LERMA.

And if your highness
Has trusted to him more of what concerns you
Than every one should know, as I am led
To fear ——

CARLOS.

You fear!

LERMA.

He has been with the king

CARLOS.

Indeed!

LERMA.

Two hours in secret converse too.

CARLOS.

Indeed!

LERMA.

The subject was no trifling matter.

CARLOS.

That I can well believe.

LERMA.

And several times
I heard your name.

CARLOS.

That's no bad sign, I hope.

LERMA.

And then, this morning, in the king's apartment,
The queen was spoken of mysteriously.

CARLOS (*starts back astonished*).

Count Lerma!

LERMA.

When the marquis had retired
I was commanded to admit his lordship
In future unannounced.

CARLOS.

Astonishing!

LERMA.

And without precedent do I believe,
Long as I served the king ——

CARLOS.

'Tis strange, indeed!
How did you say the queen was spoken of?

LERMA (*steps back*).

No, no, my prince! that were against my duty.

CARLOS.

'Tis somewhat strange! One secret you impart.
The other you withhold.

LERMA.

The first was due
To you, the other to the king.

CARLOS.

You're right.

LERMA.

And still I've thought you, prince, a man of honor.

CARLOS.

Then you have judged me truly.

LERMA.

But all virtue
Is spotless till it's tried.

CARLOS.

Some stand the trial.

LERMA.

A powerful monarch's favor is a prize
Worth seeking for; and this alluring bait
Has ruined many a virtue.

CARLOS.

Truly said!

LERMA.

And oftentimes 'tis prudent to discover
What scarce can longer be concealed.

CARLOS.

Yes, prudent
It may be, but you say you've ever known
The marquis prove himself a man of honor.

LERMA.

And if he be so still my fears are harmless,
And you become a double gainer, prince. [*Going.*

CARLOS (*follows him with emotion, and presses his hand*).

Trebly I gain, upright and worthy man,
I gain another friend, nor lose the one
Whom I before possessed. [*Exit* LERMA.

SCENE V.

MARQUIS POSA *comes through the gallery.* CARLOS.

MARQUIS.

Carlos! My Carlos!

CARLOS.

Who calls me? Ah! 'tis thou — I was in haste
To gain the convent! You will not delay. [*Going.*

MARQUIS.

Hold! for a moment.

CARLOS.

We may be observed.

MARQUIS.

No chance of that. 'Tis over now. The queen ——

CARLOS.

You've seen my father.

MARQUIS.

Yes! he sent for me.

CARLOS (*full of expectation*).

Well!

MARQUIS.

'Tis all settled — you may see the queen.

CARLOS.

Yes! but the king! What said the king to you?

MARQUIS.

Not much. Mere curiosity to learn
My history. The zeal of unknown friends —
I know not what. He offered me employment.

CARLOS.

Which you, of course, rejected?

MARQUIS.

Yes, of course!

CARLOS.

How did you separate?

MARQUIS.

Oh, well enough!

CARLOS.

And was I mentioned?

MARQUIS.

Yes; in general terms.

[*Taking out a pocketbook and giving it to the* PRINCE.
See here are two lines written by the queen,
To-morrow I will settle where and how.

CARLOS (*reads it carelessly, puts the tablet in his pocket, and is going.*)

You'll meet me at the prior's?

MARQUIS.

Yes! But stay ——
Why in such haste? No one is coming hither.

CARLOS (*with a forced smile*).

Have we in truth changed characters? To-day
You seem so bold and confident.

MARQUIS.

To-day, —
Wherefore to-day?

CARLOS.

What writes the queen to me?

MARQUIS.

Have you not read this instant?

CARLOS.

I? Oh yes.

MARQUIS.

What is't disturbs you now?

CARLOS (*reads the tablet again, delighted and fervently*)

Angel of Heaven!
I will be so, — I will be worthy of thee.
Love elevates great minds. So come what may,
Whatever thou commandest, I'll perform.
She writes that I must hold myself prepared
For a great enterprise! What can she mean?
Dost thou not know?

MARQUIS.

And, Carlos, if I knew,
Say, art thou now prepared to hear it from me?

CARLOS.

Have I offended thee? I was distracted.
Roderigo, pardon me.

MARQUIS.

Distracted! How?

CARLOS.

I scarcely know! But may I keep this tablet?

MARQUIS.

Not so! I came to ask thee for thine own.

CARLOS.

My tablet! Why?

MARQUIS.

And whatsoever writings
You have, unfit to meet a stranger's eye —
Letters or memorandums, and in short,
Your whole portfolio.

CARLOS.

Why?

MARQUIS.

That we may be
Prepared for accidents. Who can prevent
Surprise? They'll never seek them in my keeping.
Here, give them to me ——

CARLOS (*uneasy*).

Strange! What can it mean?

MARQUIS.

Be not alarmed! 'Tis nothing of importance!
A mere precaution to prevent surprise.
You need not be alarmed!

CARLOS (*gives him the portfolio*).

Be careful of it.

MARQUIS.

Be sure I will.

CARLOS (*looks at him significantly*).

I give thee much, Roderigo!

MARQUIS.

Not more than I have often had from thee.
The rest we'll talk of yonder. Now farewell. [*Going.*

CARLOS (*struggling with himself, then calls him back*).

Give me my letters back; there's one amongst them
The queen addressed to me at Alcala,
When I was sick to death. Still next my heart

I carry it; to take this letter from me
Goes to my very soul. But leave me that,
And take the rest.

[*He takes it out, and returns the portfolio.*

MARQUIS.

I yield unwillingly ——
For 'twas that letter which I most required.

CARLOS.

Farewell!

[*He goes away slowly, stops a moment at the door, turns back again, and brings him the letter.*

You have it there.

[*His hand trembles, tears start from his eyes, he falls on the neck of the* MARQUIS, *and presses his face to his bosom.*

Oh, not my father,
Could do so much, Roderigo! Not my father!

[*Exit hastily.*

SCENE VI.

MARQUIS (*looks after him with astonishment*).

And is this possible! And to this hour
Have I not known him fully? In his heart
This blemish has escaped my eye. Distrust
Of me — his friend! But no, 'tis calumny!
What hath he done that I accuse him thus
Of weakest weakness. I myself commit
The fault I charge on him. What have I done
Might well surprise him! When hath he displayed
To his best friend such absolute reserve?
Carlos, I must afflict thee — there's no help —
And longer still distress thy noble soul.
In me the king hath placed his confidence,
His holiest trust reposed — as in a casket,
And this reliance calls for gratitude.
How can disclosure serve thee when my silence
Brings thee no harm — serves thee, perhaps? Ah! why
Point to the traveller the impending storm?

Enough, if I direct its anger past thee!
And when thou wakest the sky's again serene. [*Exit.*

Scene VII.

The King's *Cabinet.*

The King *seated, near him the* Infanta Clara Eugenia.

KING (*after a deep silence*).

No — she is sure my daughter — or can nature
Thus lie like truth! Yes, that blue eye is mine!
And I am pictured in thy every feature.
Child of my love! for such thou art — I fold thee
Thus to my heart; thou art my blood. [*Starts and pauses.*
My blood —
What's worse to fear? Are not my features his?
[*Takes the miniature in his hand and looks first at the portrait, then at the mirror opposite; at last he throws it on the ground, rises hastily, and pushes the* Infanta *from him.*
Away, away! I'm lost in this abyss.

Scene VIII.

Count Lerma *and the* King.

LERMA.

Her majesty is in the antechamber.

KING.

What! Now?

LERMA.

And begs the favor of an audience.

KING.

Now! At this unaccustomed hour! Not now —
I cannot see her yet.

LERMA.

Here comes the queen.
[*Exit* Lerma.

SCENE IX.

The KING, *the* QUEEN *enters, and the* INFANTA.

The INFANTA *runs to meet the* QUEEN *and clings to her; the* QUEEN *falls at the* KING'S *feet, who is silent, and appears confused and embarrassed.*

QUEEN.

My lord! My husband! I'm constrained to seek
Justice before the throne!

KING.

What? Justice!

QUEEN.

Yes!
I'm treated with dishonor at the court!
My casket has been rifled.

KING.

What! Your casket?

QUEEN.

And things I highly value have been plundered.

KING.

Things that you highly value.

QUEEN.

From the meaning
Which ignorant men's officiousness, perhaps,
Might give to them ——

KING.

What's this? Officiousness,
And meaning! How? But rise.

QUEEN.

Oh no, my husband!
Not till you bind yourself by sacred promise,
By virtue of your own authority,
To find the offender out, and grant redress,
Or else dismiss my suite, which hides a thief.

KING.

But rise! In such a posture! Pray you, rise.

QUEEN (*rises*).

'Tis some one of distinction — I know well;
My casket held both diamonds and pearls
Of matchless value, but he only took
My letters.

KING.

May I ask ——

QUEEN.

Undoubtedly,
My husband. They were letters from the prince:
His miniature as well.

KING.

From whom?

QUEEN.

The prince,
Your son.

KING.

To you?

QUEEN.

Sent by the prince to me.

KING.

What! From Prince Carlos! Do you tell me that?

QUEEN.

Why not tell you, my husband?

KING.

And not blush.

QUEEN.

What mean you? You must surely recollect
The letters Carlos sent me to St. Germains,
With both courts' full consent. Whether that leave
Extended to the portrait, or alone
His hasty hope dictated such a step,
I cannot now pretend to answer; but
If even rash, it may at least be pardoned
For thus much I may be his pledge — that then
He never thought the gift was for his mother.

[*Observes the agitation of the* KING.

What moves you? What's the matter?

INFANTA (*who has found the miniature on the ground, and has been playing with it, brings it to the* QUEEN.

Look, dear mother!
See what a pretty picture!

QUEEN.

What then my ——

[*She recognizes the miniature, and remains in speechless astonishment. They both gaze at each other. After a long pause.*

In truth, this mode of trying a wife's heart
Is great and royal, sire! But I should wish
To ask one question?

KING.

'Tis for me to question.

QUEEN.

Let my suspicions spare the innocent.
And if by your command this theft was done ——

KING.

It was so done!

QUEEN.

Then I have none to blame,
And none to pity — other than yourself —
Since you possess a wife on whom such schemes
Are thrown away.

KING.

This language is not new —
Nor shall you, madam, now again deceive me
As in the gardens of Aranjuez —
My queen of angel purity, who then
So haughtily my accusation spurned —
I know her better now.

QUEEN.

What mean you, sire?

KING.

Madam! thus briefly and without reserve —
Say is it true? still true, that you conversed
With no one there? Is really that the truth?

QUEEN.

I spoke there with the prince.

KING.

Then it is clear
As day! So daring! heedless of mine honor!

QUEEN.

Your honor, sire! If that be now the question,
A greater honor is, methinks, at stake
Than Castile ever brought me as a dowry.

KING.

Why did you then deny the prince's presence?

QUEEN.

Because I'm not accustomed to be questioned
Like a delinquent before all your courtiers;
I never shall deny the truth when asked
With kindness and respect. Was that the tone
Your majesty used towards me in Aranjuez?
Are your assembled grandees the tribunal
Queens must account to for their private conduct?
I gave the prince the interview he sought
With earnest prayer, because, my liege and lord,
I — the queen — wished and willed it, and because
I never can admit that formal custom
Should sit as judge on actions that are guiltless;
And I concealed it from your majesty
Because I chose not to contend with you
About this right in presence of your courtiers.

KING.

You speak with boldness, madam!

QUEEN.

I may add,
Because the prince, in his own father's heart,
Scarce finds that kindness he so well deserves.

KING.

So well deserves!

QUEEN.

Why, sire! should I conceal it!
Highly do I esteem him — yes! and love him
As a most dear relation, who was once
Deemed worthy of a dearer — tenderer — title.
I've yet to learn that he, on this account,
Should be estranged from me beyond all others, —
Because he once was better loved than they.
Though your state policy may knit together
What bands it pleases — 'tis a harder task
To burst such ties! I will not hate another
For any one's command — and since I must
So speak — such dictates I will not endure.

KING.

Elizabeth! you've seen me in weak moments —
And their remembrance now emboldens you.
On that strong influence you now depend,
Which you have often, with so much success,
Against my firmness tried. But fear the more!
The power which has seduced me to be weak
May yet inflame me to some act of madness.

QUEEN.

What have I done?

KING (*takes her hand*).

If it should prove but so —
And is it not already? If the full
Accumulated measure of your guilt
Become but one breath heavier — should I be
Deceived —— [*Lets her hand go.*
I can subdue these last remains
Of weakness — can and will — then woe betide
Myself and you, Elizabeth!

QUEEN.

What crime
Have I committed?

KING.

On my own account then
Shall blood be shed.

QUEEN.

And has it come to this?
Oh, Heaven!

KING.

I shall forget myself — I shall
Regard no usage and no voice of nature —
Not e'en the law of nations.

QUEEN.

Oh, how much
I pity you!

KING.

The pity of a harlot!

INFANTA (*clinging to her mother in terror*).

The king is angry, and my mother weeps.

[KING *pushes the child violently from the* QUEEN.

QUEEN (*with mildness and dignity, but with faltering voice*).

This child I must protect from cruelty —
Come with me, daughter. [*Takes her in her arms.*
If the king no more
Acknowledge thee — beyond the Pyrenees
I'll call protectors to defend our cause. [*Going.*

KING (*embarrassed*).

Queen!

QUEEN.

I can bear no more — it is too much!

[*Hastening to the door, she falls with her child on the threshold.*

KING (*running to her assistance*).

Heavens! What is that?

INFANTA (*cries out with terror*).

She bleeds! My mcther bleeds!
[*Runs out.*

KING (*anxiously assisting her*).

Oh, what a fearful accident! You bleed;
Do I deserve this cruel punishment?
Rise and collect yourself — rise, they are coming!

They will surprise us! Shall the assembled court
Divert themselves with such a spectacle?
Must I entreat you? Rise.

[*She rises, supported by the* KING

SCENE X.

The former, ALVA, DOMINGO *entering, alarmed, ladies follow.*

KING.

Now let the queen
Be led to her apartment; she's unwell.

[*Exit the* QUEEN, *attended by her ladies.* ALVA *and* DOMINGO *come forward.*

ALVA.

The queen in tears, and blood upon her face!

KING.

Does that surprise the devils who've misled me?

ALVA *and* DOMINGO.

We?

KING.

You have said enough to drive me mad.
But nothing to convince me.

ALVA.

We gave you
What we ourselves possessed.

KING.

May hell reward you!
I've done what I repent of! Ah! was hers
The language of a conscience dark with guilt?

MARQUIS POSA (*from without*).

Say, can I see the king?

SCENE XI.

The former, MARQUIS POSA.

KING (*starts up at the sound of his voice, and advances some paces to meet him*).

Ah! here he comes.

Right welcome, marquis! Duke! I need you now
No longer. Leave us.

[ALVA *and* DOMINGO *look at each other with silent astonishment and retire.*

SCENE XII.

The KING, *and* MARQUIS POSA.

MARQUIS.

That old soldier, sire,
Who has faced death, in twenty battles, for you,
Must hold it thankless to be so dismissed.

KING.

'Tis thus for you to think — for me to act;
In a few hours you have been more to me
Than that man in a lifetime. Nor shall I
Keep my content a secret. On your brow
The lustre of my high and royal favor
Shall shine resplendent — I will make that man
A mark for envy whom I choose my friend.

MARQUIS.

What if the veil of dark obscurity
Were his sole claim to merit such a title?

KING.

What come you now to tell me?

MARQUIS.

As I passed
Along the antechamber a dread rumor
Fell on my ear, — it seemed incredible, —
Of a most angry quarrel — blood — the queen ——

KING.

Come you from her?

MARQUIS.

I should be horrified
Were not the rumor false: or should perhaps
Your majesty meantime have done some act —
Discoveries of importance I have made,
Which wholly change the aspect of affairs.

KING.

How now?

MARQUIS.

I found an opportunity
To seize your son's portfolio, with his letters,
Which, as I hope, may throw some light——

[*He gives the* PRINCE'S *portfolio to the* KING.

KING (*looks through it eagerly*).

A letter
From the emperor, my father. How! a letter
Of which I ne'er remember to have heard.

[*He reads it through, puts it aside, and goes to the other papers.*

A drawing of some fortress — detached thoughts
From Tacitus — and what is here? The hand
I surely recognize — it is a lady's.

[*He reads it attentively, partly to himself, and partly aloud.*

"This key — the farthest chamber of the queen's
Pavilion!" Ha! what's this? "The voice of love
The timid lover — may — a rich reward."
Satanic treachery! I see it now.
'Tis she — 'tis her own writing!

MARQUIS.

The queen's writing!
Impossible?

KING.

The Princess Eboli's.

MARQUIS.

Then, it was true, what the queen's page confessed,
Not long since — that he brought this key and letter.

KING (*grasping the* MARQUIS' *hand in great emotion*).

Marquis! I see that I'm in dreadful hands.
This woman — I confess it — 'twas this woman
Forced the queen's casket: and my first suspicions
Were breathed by her. Who knows how deep the priest
May be engaged in this? I am deceived
By cursed villany.

MARQUIS.

Then it was lucky ——

KING.

Marquis! O marquis! I begin to fear
I've wronged my wife.

MARQUIS.

If there exist between
The prince and queen some secret understandings,
They are of other import, rest assured,
Than those they charge her with. I know, for certain,
The prince's prayer to be despatched to Flanders
Was by the queen suggested.

KING.

I have thought so.

MARQUIS.

The queen's ambitious. Dare I speak more fully?
She sees, with some resentment, her high hopes
All disappointed, and herself shut out
From share of empire. Your son's youthful ardor
Offers itself to her far-reaching views,
Her heart! I doubt if she can love.

KING.

Her schemes
Of policy can never make me tremble.

MARQUIS.

Whether the Infant loves her — whether we
Have something worse to fear from him,— are things
Worthy our deep attention. To these points
Our strictest vigilance must be directed.

KING.

You must be pledge for him.

MARQUIS.

And if the king
Esteem me capable of such a task,
I must entreat it be intrusted to me
Wholly without conditions.

KING.

So it shall.

MARQUIS.

That in the steps which I may think required,
I may be thwarted by no coadjutors,
Whatever name they bear.

KING.

I pledge my word
You shall not. You have proved my guardian angel.
How many thanks I owe you for this service!
[LERMA *enters — the* KING *to him.*
How did you leave the queen?

LERMA.

But scarce recovered
From her deep swoon.
[*He looks at the* MARQUIS *doubtfully, and exit.*

MARQUIS (*to the* KING, *after a pause*).

One caution yet seems needful.
The prince may be advised of our design,
For he has many faithful friends in Ghent,
And may have partisans among the rebels.
Fear may incite to desperate resolves;
Therefore I counsel that some speedy means
Be taken to prevent this fatal chance.

KING.

You are quite right — but how?

MARQUIS.

Your majesty
May sign a secret warrant of arrest
And place it in my hands, to be employed,
As may seem needful, in the hour of danger.
[*The* KING *appears thoughtful.*
This step must be a most profound state secret
Until ——

KING (*going to his desk and writing the warrant of arrest*).

The kingdom is at stake, and now
The pressing danger sanctions urgent measures.
Here marquis! I need scarcely say — use prudence.

MARQUIS (*taking the warrant*).

'Tis only for the last extremity.

KING (*laying his hand on the shoulder of the* MARQUIS).

Go! Go, dear marquis! Give this bosom peace,
And bring back slumber to my sleepless pillow.

[*Exeunt at different sides.*

SCENE XIII.

A Gallery.

CARLOS *entering in extreme agitation*, COUNT LERMA *meeting him.*

CARLOS.

I have been seeking you.

LERMA.

And I your highness.

CARLOS.

For heaven's sake is it true?

LERMA.

What do you mean?

CARLOS.

That the king drew his dagger, and that she
Was borne, all bathed in blood, from the apartment?
Now answer me, by all that's sacred; say,
What am I to believe? What truth is in it?

LERMA.

She fainted, and so grazed her skin in falling:
That is the whole.

CARLOS.

Is there no further danger?
Count, answer on your honor.

LERMA.

For the queen
No further danger; for yourself there's much!

CARLOS.

None for my mother. Then, kind Heaven, I thank thee.
A dreadful rumor reached me that the king
Raved against child and mother, and that some
Dire secret was discovered.

LERMA.

And the last
May possibly be true.

CARLOS.

Be true! What mean you?

LERMA.

One warning have I given you, prince, already,
And that to-day, but you despised it; now
Perhaps you'll profit better by a second.

CARLOS.

Explain yourself.

LERMA.

If I mistake not, prince,
A few days since I noticed in your hands
An azure-blue portfolio, worked in velvet
And chased with gold.

CARLOS (*with anxiety*).

Yes, I had such a one.

LERMA.

And on the cover, if I recollect,
A portrait set in pearls?

CARLOS.

'Tis right; go on.

LERMA.

I entered the king's chamber on a sudden,
And in his hands I marked that same portfolio,
The Marquis Posa standing by his side.

CARLOS (*after a short silence of astonishment, hastily*).

'Tis false!

LERMA (*warmly*).

Then I'm a traitor!

CARLOS (*looking steadfastly at him*).

That you are!

LERMA.

Well, I forgive you.

CARLOS (*paces the apartment in extreme agitation, at length stands still before him*).

Has he injured thee?
What have our guiltless ties of friendship done,
That with a demon's zeal thou triest to rend them?

LERMA.

Prince, I respect the grief which renders you
So far unjust.

CARLOS.

Heaven shield me from suspicion!

LERMA.

And I remember, too, the king's own words.
Just as I entered he addressed the marquis:
"How many thanks I owe you for this news."

CARLOS.

Oh, say no more!

LERMA.

Duke Alva is disgraced!
The great seal taken from the Prince Ruy Gomez,
And given to the marquis.

CARLOS (*lost in deep thought*).

And from me
Has he concealed all this? And why from me?

LERMA.

As minister all-powerful, the court
Looks on him now — as favorite unrivalled!

CARLOS.

He loved me — loved me greatly: I was dear
As his own soul is to him. That I know —
Of that I've had a thousand proofs. But should
The happiness of millions yield to one?
Must not his country dearer to him prove

Than Carlos? One friend only is too few
For his capacious heart. And not enough
Is Carlos' happiness to engross his love.
He offers me a sacrifice to virtue;
And shall I murmur at him? Now 'tis certain
I have forever lost him.

[*He steps aside and covers his face.*

LERMA.

Dearest prince!
How can I serve you?

CARLOS (*without looking at him*).

Get you to the king;
Go and betray me. I have naught to give.

LERMA.

Will you then stay and brave the ill that follows?

CARLOS (*leans on a balustrade and looks forward with a vacant gaze*).

I've lost him now, and I am destitute!

LERMA (*approaching him with sympathizing emotion*).

And will you not consult your safety, prince?

CARLOS.

My safety! Generous man!

LERMA.

And is there, then,
No other person you should tremble for?

CARLOS (*starts up*).

Heavens! you remind me now. Alas! My mother!
The letter that I gave him — first refused —
Then after gave him!

[*He paces backwards and forwards with agitation, wringing his hands.*

Has she then deserved
This blow from him? He should have spared her, Lerma.

[*In a hasty, determined tone.*

But I must see her — warn her of her danger —
I must prepare her, Lerma, dearest Lerma!

Whom shall I send? Have I no friend remaining?
Yes! Heaven be praised! I still have one; and now
The worst is over. [*Exit quickly*

LERMA (*follows, and calls after him*).
Whither, whither, prince?

Scene IV.

The Queen, Alva, Domingo.

ALVA.

If we may be permitted, gracious queen ——

QUEEN.

What are your wishes?

DOMINGO.

A most true regard
For your high majesty forbids us now
To watch in careless silence an event
Pregnant with danger to your royal safety.

ALVA.

We hasten, by a kind and timely warning,
To counteract a plot that's laid against you.

DOMINGO.

And our warm zeal, and our best services,
To lay before your feet, most gracious queen!

QUEEN (*looking at them with astonishment*).

Most reverend sir, and you, my noble duke,
You much surprise me. Such sincere attachment,
In truth, I had not hoped for from Domingo,
Nor from Duke Alva. Much I value it.
A plot you mention, menacing my safety —
Dare I inquire by whom ——

ALVA.

We must entreat
You will beware a certain Marquis Posa.
He has of late been secretly employed
In the king's service.

QUEEN.

With delight I hear
The king has made so excellent a choice.
Report, long since, has spoken of the marquis
As a deserving, great, and virtuous man —
The royal grace was ne'er so well bestowed!

DOMINGO.

So well bestowed! We think far otherwise.

ALVA.

It is no secret now, for what designs
This man has been employed.

QUEEN.

How! What designs?
You put my expectation on the rack.

DOMINGO.

How long is it since last your majesty
Opened your casket?

QUEEN.

Why do you inquire?

DOMINGO.

Did you not miss some articles of value?

QUEEN.

Why these suspicions? What I missed was then
Known to the court! But what of Marquis Posa?
Say, what connection has all this with him?

ALVA.

The closest, please your majesty — the prince
Has lost some papers of importance;
And they were seen this morning with the king
After the marquis had an audience of him.

QUEEN (*after some consideration*).

This news is strange indeed — inexplicable —
To find a foe where I could ne'er have dreamed it,
And two warm friends I knew not I possessed!
[*Fixing her eyes steadfastly upon them.*

And, to speak truth, I had well nigh imputed
To you the wicked turn my husband served me.

ALVA.

To us!

QUEEN.

To you yourselves!

DOMINGO.

To us! Duke Alva!

QUEEN (*her eyes still fastened on them*).

I am glad to be so timely made aware
Of my rash judgment — else had I resolved
This very day to beg his majesty
Would bring me face to face with my accusers.
But I'm contented now. I can appeal
To the Duke Alva for his testimony.

ALVA.

For mine? You would not sure do that!

QUEEN.

Why not?

ALVA.

'Twould counteract the services we might
Render in secret to you.

QUEEN.

How! in secret?
[*With stern dignity.*
I fain would know what secret projects, duke,
Your sovereign's spouse can have to form with you,
Or, priest! with you — her husband should not know?
Think you that I am innocent or guilty?

DOMINGO.

Strange question!

ALVA.

Should the monarch prove unjust —
And at this time ——

QUEEN.

Then I must wait for justice
Until it come — and they are happiest far
Whose consciences may calmly wait their right.
[*Bows to them and exit.* DOMINGO *and* ALVA *exeunt on the opposite side.*

SCENE XV.

Chamber of PRINCESS EBOLI.

PRINCESS EBOLI. CARLOS *immediately after.*

EBOLI.

Is it then true — the strange intelligence,
That fills the court with wonder?

CARLOS (*enters*).

Do not fear
Princess! I shall be gentle as a child.

EBOLI.

Prince, this intrusion!

CARLOS.

Are you angry still?
Offended still with me ——

EBOLI.

Prince!

CARLOS (*earnestly*).

Are you angry?
I pray you answer me.

EBOLI.

What can this mean?
You seem, prince, to forget—what would you with me?

CARLOS (*seizing her hand with warmth*).

Dear maiden! Can you hate eternally?
Can injured love ne'er pardon?

EBOLI (*disengaging herself*).

Prince! of what
Would you remind me?

CARLOS.

Of your kindness, dearest!
And of my deep ingratitude. Alas,
Too well I know it! deeply have I wronged thee —
Wounded thy tender heart, and from thine eyes,
Thine angel eyes, wrung precious tears, sweet maid!
But ah! 'tis not repentance leads me hither.

EBOLI.

Prince! leave me — I ——

CARLOS.

I come to thee, because
Thou art a maid of gentle soul — because
I trust thy heart — thy kind and tender heart.
Think, dearest maiden! think, I have no friend,
No friend but thee, in all this wretched world —
Thou who wert once so kind wilt not forever
Hate me, nor will thy anger prove eternal.

EBOLI (*turning away her face*).

O cease! No more! for heaven's sake! leave me, prince

CARLOS.

Let me remind thee of those golden hours —
Let me remind thee of thy love, sweet maid —
That love which I so basely have offended!
Oh, let me now appear to thee again
As once I was — and as thy heart portrayed me.
Yet once again, once only, place my image,
As in days past, before thy tender soul,
And to that idol make a sacrifice
Thou canst not make to me.

EBOLI.

Oh, Carlos, cease!
Too cruelly thou sportest with my feelings!

CARLOS.

Be nobler than thy sex! Forgive an insult!
Do what no woman e'er has done before thee,
And what no woman, after thee, can equal.
I ask of thee an unexampled favor.

Grant me — upon my knees I ask of thee —
Grant me two moments with the queen, my mother!
[*He casts himself at her feet.*

Scene XVI.

The former. Marquis Posa *rushes in; behind him two officers of the Queen's Guard.*

MARQUIS (*breathless and agitated, rushing between* CARLOS *and the* PRINCESS).

Say, what has he confessed? Believe him not!

CARLOS (*still on his knees, with loud voice*).

By all that's holy ——

MARQUIS (*interrupting him with vehemence*).

He is mad! He raves!
Oh, listen to him not!

CARLOS (*louder and more urgent*).

It is a question
Of life and death; conduct me to her straight.

MARQUIS (*dragging the* PRINCESS *from him by force*).

You die, if you but listen.
[*To one of the officers, showing an order.*
Count of Cordova!
In the king's name, Prince Carlos is your prisoner.
[Carlos *stands bewildered. The* Princess *utters a cry of horror, and tries to escape. The officers are astounded. A long and deep pause ensues. The* Marquis *trembles violently, and with difficulty preserves his composure.* [*To the* Prince.
I beg your sword — The Princess Eboli
Remains —— [*To the officers.*
And you, on peril of your lives,
Let no one with his highness speak — no person —
Not e'en yourselves.
[*He whispers a few words to one officer, then turns to the other.*
I hasten, instantly,

To cast myself before our monarch's feet,
And justify this step —— [*To the* PRINCE.
And prince! for you —
Expect me in an hour.

[CARLOS *permits himself to be led away without any signs of consciousness, except that in passing he casts a languid, dying look on the* MARQUIS. *The* PRINCESS *endeavors again to escape; the* MARQUIS *pulls her back by the arm.*

SCENE XVII.

PRINCESS EBOLI, MARQUIS POSA.

EBOLI.

For Heaven's sake let me leave this place ——

MARQUIS (*leads her forward with dreadful earnestness*).
Thou wretch!
What has he said to thee?

EBOLI.

Oh, leave me! Nothing.

MARQUIS (*with earnestness; holding her back by force*).
How much has he imparted to thee? Here
No way is left thee to escape. To none
In this world shalt thou ever tell it.

EBOLI (*looking at him with terror*).
Heavens!
What would you do? Would you then murder me?

MARQUIS (*drawing a dagger*).
Yes, that is my resolve. Be speedy!

EBOLI.

Mercy!
What have I then committed?

MARQUIS (*looking towards heaven, points the dagger to her breast*).
Still there's time —
The poison has not issued from these lips.

Dash but the bowl to atoms, all remains
Still as before! The destinies of Spain
Against a woman's life!

[*Remains doubtingly in this position.*

EBOLI (*having sunk down beside him, looks in his face*).

Do not delay —
Why do you hesitate? I beg no mercy —
I have deserved to die, and I am ready.

MARQUIS (*letting his hand drop slowly — after some reflection*).

It were as cowardly as barbarous.
No! God be praised! another way is left.

[*He lets the dagger fall and hurries out. The* PRINCESS *hastens out through another door.*

SCENE XVIII.

A Chamber of the Queen.

The QUEEN *to the* COUNTESS FUENTES.

What means this noisy tumult in the palace?
Each breath to-day alarms me! Countess! see
What it portends, and hasten back with speed.

[*Exit* COUNTESS FUENTES — *the* PRINCESS EBOLI *rushes in.*

SCENE XIX.

The QUEEN, PRINCESS EBOLI.

EBOLI (*breathless, pale, and wild, falls before the* QUEEN).

Help! Help! O Queen! he's seized!

QUEEN.

Who?

EBOLI.

He's arrested
By the king's orders given to Marquis Posa.

QUEEN.

Who is arrested? Who?

EBOLI.

The prince!

QUEEN.

Thou ravest!

EBOLI.

This moment they are leading him away.

QUEEN.

And who arrested him?

EBOLI.

The Marquis Posa.

QUEEN.

Then heaven be praised! it was the marquis seized him!

EBOLI.

Can you speak thus, and with such tranquil mien?
Oh, heavens! you do not know — you cannot think —

QUEEN.

The cause of his arrest! some trifling error,
Doubtless arising from his headlong youth!

EBOLI.

No! no! I know far better. No, my queen!
Remorseless treachery! There's no help for him.
He dies!

QUEEN.

He dies!

EBOLI.

And I'm his murderer!

QUEEN.

What! Dies? Thou ravest! Think what thou art saying?

EBOLI.

And wherefore — wherefore dies he? Had I known
That it would come to this!

QUEEN (*takes her affectionately by the hand*).

Oh, dearest princess,
Your senses are distracted, but collect
Your wandering spirits, and relate to me
More calmly, not in images of horror

That fright my inmost soul, whate'er you know!
Say, what has happened?

EBOLI.

Oh, display not, queen,
Such heavenly condescension! Like hot flames
This kindness sears my conscience. I'm not worthy
To view thy purity with eyes profane.
Oh, crush the wretch, who, agonized by shame,
Remorse, and self-reproach writhes at thy feet!

QUEEN.

Unhappy woman! Say, what is thy guilt?

EBOLI.

Angel of light! Sweet saint! thou little knowest
The demon who has won thy loving smiles.
Know her to-day; I was the wretched thief
Who plundered thee.

QUEEN.

What! Thou?

EBOLI.

And gave thy letters
Up to the king?

QUEEN.

What! Thou?

EBOLI.

And dared accuse thee!

QUEEN.

Thou! Couldst thou this?

EBOLI.

Revenge and madness — love —
I hated thee, and loved the prince!

QUEEN.

And did
His love so prompt thee?

EBOLI.

I had owned my love,
But met with no return.

QUEEN (*after a pause*).

Now all's explained!
Rise up! — you loved him — I have pardoned you!
I have forgotten all. Now, princess, rise.
[*Holding out her hand to the* PRINCESS.

EBOLI.

No, no; a foul confession still remains.
I will not rise, great queen, till I ——

QUEEN.

Then speak!
What have I yet to hear?

EBOLI.

The king! Seduction!
Oh, now you turn away. And in your eyes
I read abhorrence. Yes; of that foul crime
I charged you with, I have myself been guilty.
[*She presses her burning face to the ground. Exit* QUEEN. *A long pause. The* COUNTESS OLIVAREZ, *after some minutes, comes out of the cabinet, into which the* QUEEN *entered, and finds the* PRINCESS *still lying in the above posture. She approaches in silence. On hearing a noise, the latter looks up and becomes like a mad person when she misses the* QUEEN.

SCENE XX.

PRINCESS EBOLI, COUNTESS OLIVAREZ.

EBOLI.

Heavens! she has left me. I am now undone!

OLIVAREZ (*approaching her*).

My princess — Eboli!

EBOLI.

I know your business,
Duchess, and you come hither from the queen,
To speak my sentence to me; do it quickly.

OLIVAREZ.

I am commanded by your majesty
To take your cross and key.

EBOLI (*takes from her breast a golden cross, and gives it to the* DUCHESS).

And but once more
May I not kiss my gracious sovereign's hand

OLIVAREZ.

In holy Mary's convent shall you learn
Your fate, princess.

EBOLI (*with a flood of tears*).

Alas! then I no more
Shall ever see the queen.

OLIVAREZ (*embraces her with her face turned away*).

Princess, farewell.

[*She goes hastily away. The* PRINCESS *follows her as far as the door of the cabinet, which is immediately locked after the* DUCHESS. *She remains a few minutes silent and motionless on her knees before it. She then rises and hastens away, covering her face.*

SCENE XXI.

QUEEN, MARQUIS POSA.

QUEEN.

Ah, marquis, I am glad you're come at last!

MARQUIS (*pale, with a disturbed countenance and trembling voice, in solemn, deep agitation, during the whole scene*).

And is your majesty alone? Can none
Within the adjoining chamber overhear us?

QUEEN.

No one! But why? What news would you impart?
[*Looking at him closely, and drawing back alarmed.*
And what has wrought this change in you? Speak, marquis,

You make me tremble — all your features seem
So marked with death!

MARQUIS.

You know, perhaps, already.

QUEEN.

That Carlos is arrested — and they add,
By you! Is it then true? From no one else
Would I believe it but yourself.

MARQUIS.

'Tis true.

QUEEN.

By you?

MARQUIS.

By me?

QUEEN (*looks at him for some time doubtingly*).

I still respect your actions
E'en when I comprehend them not. In this
Pardon a timid woman! I much fear
You play a dangerous game.

MARQUIS.

And I have lost it.

QUEEN.

Merciful heaven!

MARQUIS.

Queen, fear not! He is safe,
But I am lost myself.

QUEEN.

What do I hear?

MARQUIS.

Who bade me hazard all on one chance throw?
All? And with rash, foolhardy confidence,
Sport with the power of heaven? Of bounded mind,
Man, who is not omniscient, must not dare
To guide the helm of destiny. 'Tis just!
But why these thoughts of self. This hour is precious
As life can be to man: and who can tell

Whether the parsimonious hand of fate
May not have measured my last drops of life?

QUEEN.

The hand of fate! What means this solemn tone?
I understand these words not — but I shudder.

MARQUIS.

He's saved! no matter at what price — he's saved!
But only for to-day — a few short hours
Are his. Oh, let him husband them! This night
The prince must leave Madrid.

QUEEN.

This very night?

MARQUIS.

All measures are prepared. The post will meet him
At the Carthusian convent, which has served
So long as an asylum to our friendship.
Here will he find, in letters of exchange,
All in the world that fortune gifts me with.
Should more be wanting, you must e'en supply it.
In truth, I have within my heart full much
To unburden to my Carlos — it may chance
I shall want leisure now to tell him all
In person — but this evening you will see him,
And therefore I address myself to you.

QUEEN.

Oh, for my peace of mind, dear marquis, speak!
Explain yourself more clearly! Do not use
This dark, and fearful, and mysterious language!
Say, what has happened?

MARQUIS.

I have yet one thing,
A matter of importance on my mind:
In your hands I deposit it. My lot
Was such as few indeed have e'er enjoyed —
I loved a prince's son. My heart to one —
To that one object given — embraced the world!
I have created in my Carlos' soul,
A paradise for millions! Oh, my dream

Was lovely! But the will of Providence
Has summoned me away, before my hour,
From this my beauteous work. His Roderigo
Soon shall be his no more, and friendship's claim
Will be transferred to love. Here, therefore, here,
Upon this sacred altar — on the heart
Of his loved queen — I lay my last bequest
A precious legacy — he'll find it here,
When I shall be no more.

[*He turns away, his voice choked with grief.*

QUEEN.

This is the language
Of a dying man — it surely emanates
But from your blood's excitement — or does sense
Lie hidden in your language?

MARQUIS (*has endeavored to collect himself, and continues in a solemn voice*).

Tell the prince,
That he must ever bear in mind the oath
We swore, in past enthusiastic days,
Upon the sacred host. I have kept mine —
I'm true to him till death — 'tis now his turn ——

QUEEN.

Till death?

MARQUIS.

Oh, bid him realize the dream,
The glowing vision which our friendship painted,
Of a new — perfect realm! And let him lay
The first hand on the rude, unshapened stone.
Whether he fail or prosper — all alike —
Let him commence the work. When centuries
Have rolled away shall Providence again
Raise to the throne a princely youth like him,
And animate again a favorite son
Whose breast shall burn with like enthusiasm.
Tell him, in manhood, he must still revere
The dreams of early youth, nor ope the heart
Of heaven's all-tender flower to canker-worms
Of boasted reason, — nor be led astray

When, by the wisdom of the dust, he hears
Enthusiasm, heavenly-born, blasphemed.
I have already told him.

QUEEN.

Whither, marquis?
Whither does all this tend?

MARQUIS.

And tell him further,
I lay upon his soul the happiness
Of man — that with my dying breath I claim,
Demand it of him — and with justest title.
I had designed a new, a glorious morn,
To waken in these kingdoms: for to me
Philip had opened all his inmost heart —
Called me his son — bestowed his seals upon me —
And Alva was no more his counsellor.
[*He pauses, and looks at the* QUEEN *for a few moments in silence.*
You weep! I know those tears, beloved soul!
Oh, they are tears of joy! — but it is past —
Forever past! Carlos or I? The choice
Was prompt and fearful. One of us must perish!
And I will be that one. Oh, ask no more!

QUEEN.

Now, now, at last, I comprehend your meaning,
Unhappy man! What have you done?

MARQUIS.

Cut off
Two transient hours of evening to secure
A long, bright summer-day! I now give up
The king forever. What were I to the king?
In such cold soil no rose of mine could bloom;
In my great friend must Europe's fortune ripen.
Spain I bequeath to him, still bathed in blood
From Philip's iron hand. But woe to him,
Woe to us both, if I have chosen wrong!
But no — oh, no! I know my Carlos better —

'Twill never come to pass! — for this, my queen,
You stand my surety. [*After a silence.*
Yes! I saw his love
In its first blossom — saw his fatal passion
Take root in his young heart. I had full power
To check it; but I did not. The attachment
Which seemed to me not guilty, I still nourished.
The world may censure me, but I repent not,
Nor does my heart accuse me. I saw life
Where death appeared to others. In a flame
So hopeless I discerned hope's golden beam.
I wished to lead him to the excellent —
To exalt him to the highest point of beauty.
Mortality denied a model to me,
And language, words. Then did I bend his views
To this point only — and my whole endeavor
Was to explain to him his love.

QUEEN.

Your friend,
Marquis! so wholly occupied your mind,
That for his cause you quite forgot my own —
Could you suppose that I had thrown aside
All woman's weaknesses, that you could dare
Make me his angel, and confide alone
In virtue for his armor? You forget
What risks this heart must run, when we ennoble
Passion with such a beauteous name as this.

MARQUIS.

Yes, in all other women — but in one,
One only, 'tis not so. For you, I swear it.
And should you blush to indulge the pure desire
To call heroic virtue into life?
Can it affect King Philip, that his works
Of noblest art, in the Escurial, raise
Immortal longings in the painter's soul,
Who stands entranced before them? Do the sounds
That slumber in the lute, belong alone
To him who buys the chords? With ear unmoved
He may preserve his treasure: — he has bought
The wretched right to shiver it to atoms,

But not the power to wake its silver tones,
Or, in the magic of its sounds, dissolve.
Truth is created for the sage, as beauty
Is for the feeling heart. They own each other.
And this belief, no coward prejudice
Shall make me e'er disclaim. Then promise, queen,
That you will ever love him. That false shame,
Or fancied dignity, shall never make you
Yield to the voice of base dissimulation: —
That you will love him still, unchanged, forever.
Promise me this, oh, queen! Here solemnly
Say, do you promise?

QUEEN.

That my heart alone
Shall ever vindicate my love, I promise ——

MARQUIS (*drawing his hand back*).

Now I die satisified — my work is done.
[*He bows to the* QUEEN, *and is about to go.*

QUEEN (*follows him with her eyes in silence*).

You are then going, marquis, and have not
Told me how soon — and when — we meet again?

MARQUIS (*comes back once more, his face turned away*).

Yes, we shall surely meet again!

QUEEN.

Now, Posa,
I understand you. Why have you done this?

MARQUIS.

Carlos or I myself!

QUEEN.

No! no! you rush
Headlong into a deed you deem sublime.
Do not deceive yourself: I know you well:
Long have you thirsted for it. If your pride
But have its fill, what matters it to you
Though thousand hearts should break. Oh! now, at length,
I comprehend your feelings — 'tis the love
Of admiration which has won your heart ——

MARQUIS (*surprised, aside*).

No! I was not prepared for this ——

QUEEN (*after a pause*).

Oh, marquis!
Is there no hope of preservation?

MARQUIS.

None.

QUEEN.

None? Oh, consider well! None possible!
Not e'en by me?

MARQUIS.

Not even, queen, by thee.

QUEEN.

You but half know me — I have courage, marquis ——

MARQUIS.

I know it ——

QUEEN.

And no means of safety?

MARQUIS.

None!

QUEEN (*turning away and covering her face*).

Go! Never more shall I respect a man ——

MARQUIS (*casts himself on his knees before her in evident emotion*).

O queen! O heaven! how lovely still is life!

[*He starts up and rushes out. The* QUEEN *retires into her cabinet.*

SCENE XXII.

DUKE ALVA *and* DOMINGO *walking up and down in silence and separately.* COUNT LERMA *comes out of the* KING'S *cabinet, and afterwards* DON RAYMOND OF TAXIS, *the Postmaster-General.*

LERMA.

Has not the marquis yet appeared?

ALVA.

Not yet.

[LERMA *about to re-enter the cabinet.*

TAXIS (*enters*).

Count Lerma! Pray announce me to the king?

LERMA.

His majesty cannot be seen.

TAXIS.

But say
That I must see him; that my business is
Of urgent import to his majesty.
Make haste — it will admit of no delay.

[LERMA *enters the cabinet.*

ALVA.

Dear Taxis, you must learn a little patience —
You cannot see the king.

TAXIS.

Not see him! Why?

ALVA.

You should have been considerate, and procured
Permission from the Marquis Posa first —
Who keeps both son and father in confinement.

TAXIS.

The Marquis Posa! Right — that is the man
From whom I bring this letter.

ALVA.

Ha! What letter?

TAXIS.

A letter to be forwarded to Brussels.

ALVA (*attentively*).

To Brussels?

TAXIS.

And I bring it to the king.

ALVA.

Indeed! to Brussels! Heard you that, Domingo?

DOMINGO (*joining them*).

Full of suspicion!

TAXIS.

And with anxious mien,
And deep embarrassment he gave it to me.

DOMINGO.

Embarrassment! To whom is it directed?

TAXIS.

The Prince of Orange and Nassau.

ALVA.

To William!
There's treason here, Domingo!

DOMINGO.

Nothing less!
In truth this letter must, without delay,
Be laid before the king. A noble service
You render, worthy man — to be so firm
In the discharge of duty.

TAXIS.

Reverend sir!
'Tis but my duty.

ALVA.

But you do it well.

LERMA (*coming out of the cabinet, addressing* TAXIS).

The king will see you. [TAXIS *goes in*
Is the marquis come?

DOMINGO.

He has been sought for everywhere.

ALVA.

'Tis strange!
The prince is a state prisoner! And the king
Knows not the reason why!

DOMINGO.

He never came
To explain the business here.

ALVA.

What says the king?

LERMA.

The king spoke not a word. [*A noise in the cabinet.*

ALVA.

What noise is that?

TAXIS (*coming out of the cabinet*).

Count Lerma! [*Both enter.*

ALVA (*to* DOMINGO).

What so deeply can engage them.

DOMINGO.

That look of fear! This intercepted letter!
It augurs nothing good.

ALVA.

He sends for Lerma!
Yet he must know full well that you and I
Are both in waiting.

DOMINGO.

Ah! our day is over!

ALVA.

And am I not the same to whom these doors
Flew open once? But, ah! how changed is all
Around me and how strange!

[DOMINGO *approaches the cabinet door softly, and remains listening before it.*

ALVA (*after a pause*).

Hark! All is still
And silent as the grave! I hear them breathe.

DOMINGO.

The double tapestry absorbs the sounds!

ALVA.

Away! there's some one coming. All appears
So solemn and so still — as if this instant
Some deep momentous question were decided.

Scene XXIII.

The Prince of Parma, *the* Dukes of Feria *and* Medina Sidonia, *with other* Grandees *enter — the preceding.*

PARMA.

Say, can we see the king?

ALVA.

No!

PARMA.

Who is with him?

FERIA.

The Marquis Posa, doubtless?

ALVA.

Every instant
He is expected here.

PARMA.

This moment we
Arrive from Saragossa. Through Madrid
Terror prevails! Is the announcement true?

DOMINGO.

Alas, too true!

FERIA.

That he has been arrested.
By the marquis!

ALVA.

Yes.

PARMA.

And wherefore? What's the cause?

ALVA.

Wherefore? That no one knows, except the king
And Marquis Posa.

PARMA.

And without the warrant
Of the assembled Cortes of the Realm?

FERIA.

That man shall suffer, who has lent a hand
To infringe the nation's rights.

ALVA.

And so say I!

MEDINA SIDONIA.

And I!

THE OTHER GRANDEES.

And all of us!

ALVA.

Who'll follow me
Into the cabinet? I'll throw myself
Before the monarch's feet.

LERMA (*rushing out of the cabinet*).

The Duke of Alva!

DOMINGO.

Then God be praised at last!

LERMA.

When Marquis Posa
Comes, say the king's engaged and he'll be sent for.

DOMINGO (*to* LERMA; *all the others having gathered round him, full of anxious expectation*).

Count! What has happened? You are pale as death!

LERMA (*hastening away*).

Fell villany!

PARMA *and* FERIA.

What! what!

MEDINA SIDONIA.

How is the king?

DOMINGO (*at the same time*).

Fell villany! Explain ——

LERMA.

The king shed tears!

DOMINGO.

Shed tears!

ALL (*together with astonishment*).

The king shed tears!

[*The bell rings in the cabinet,* COUNT LERMA *hastens in.*

DOMINGO.

Count, yet one word.
Pardon! He's gone! We're fettered in amazement.

Scene XXIV.

Princess Eboli, Feria, Medina Sidonia, Parma, Domingo, *and other grandees.*

EBOLI (*hurriedly and distractedly*).

Where is the king? Where? I must speak with him.
[*To* Feria.
Conduct me to him, duke!

FERIA.

The monarch is
Engaged in urgent business. No one now
Can be admitted.

EBOLI.

Has he signed, as yet,
The fatal sentence? He has been deceived.

DOMINGO (*giving her a significant look at a distance*).

The Princess Eboli!

EBOLI (*going to him*).

What! you here, priest?
The very man I want! You can confirm
My testimony!
[*She seizes his hand and would drag him into the cabinet.*

DOMINGO.

I? You rave, princess!

FERIA.

Hold back. The king cannot attend you now.

EBOLI.

But he must hear me; he must hear the truth —
The truth, were he ten times a deity.

DOMINGO.

Away! You hazard everything. Stand back.

EBOLI.

Man, tremble at the anger of thy idol.
I have naught left to hazard.

[*Attempts to enter the cabinet;* ALVA *rushes out, his eyes sparkling, triumph in his gait. He hastens to* DOMINGO, *and embraces him.*

ALVA.

Let each church
Resound with high Te Deums. Victory
At length is ours.

DOMINGO.

What! Ours?

ALVA (*to* DOMINGO *and the other* GRANDEES).

Now to the king.
You shall hereafter hear the sequel from me.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A chamber in the royal palace, separated from a large fore-court by an iron-barred gate. Sentinels walking up and down. CARLOS *sitting at a table, with his head leaning forward on his arms, as if he were asleep. In the background of the chamber are some officers, confined with him. The* MARQUIS POSA *enters, unobserved by him, and whispers to the officers, who immediately withdraw. He himself steps close up to* CARLOS, *and looks at him for a few minutes in silent sorrow. At last he makes a motion which awakens him out of his stupor.* CARLOS *rises, and seeing the* MARQUIS, *starts back. He regards him for some time with fixed eyes, and draws his hand over his forehead as if he wished to recollect something.*

MARQUIS.

Carlos! 'tis I.

CARLOS (*gives him his hand*).

Comest thou to me again?
'Tis friendly of thee, truly.

MARQUIS.

Here I thought
Thou mightest need a friend.

CARLOS.

Indeed! was that
Thy real thought? Oh, joy unspeakable!
Right well I knew thou still wert true to me.

MARQUIS.

I have deserved this from thee.

CARLOS.

Hast thou not?
And now we understand each other fully,
It joys my heart. This kindness, this forbearance
Becomes our noble souls. For should there be
One rash, unjust demand amongst my wishes,
Wouldst thou, for that, refuse me what was just?
Virtue I know may often be severe,
But never is she cruel and inhuman.
Oh! it hath cost thee much; full well I know
How thy kind heart with bitter anguish bled
As thy hands decked the victim for the altar.

MARQUIS.

What meanest thou, Carlos?

CARLOS.

Thou, thyself, wilt now
Fulfil the joyous course I should have run.
Thou wilt bestow on Spain those golden days
She might have hoped in vain to win from me.
I'm lost, forever lost; thou saw'st it clearly.
This fatal love has scattered, and forever,
All the bright, early blossoms of my mind.
To all the great, exalted hopes I'm dead.
Chance led thee to the king — or Providence, —
It cost thee but my secret — and at once
He was thine own — thou may'st become his angel:
But I am lost, though Spain perhaps may flourish.
Well, there is nothing to condemn, if not
My own mad blindness. Oh, I should have known
That thou art no less great than tender-hearted.

MARQUIS.

No! I foresaw not, I considered not
That friendship's generous heart would lead thee on

Beyond my worldly prudence. I have erred,
My fabric's shattered — I forgot thy heart.

CARLOS.

Yet, if it had been possible to spare
Her fate — oh, how intensely I had thanked thee!
Could I not bear the burden by myself?
And why must she be made a second victim?
But now no more, I'll spare thee this reproach.
What is the queen to thee? Say, dost thou love her?
Could thy exalted virtue e'er consult
The petty interests of my wretched passion?
Oh, pardon me! I was unjust ——

MARQUIS.

Thou art so!
But not for this reproach. Deserved I one,
I merit all — and then I should not stand
Before you as I do. [*He takes out his portfolio.*
I have some letters
To give you back of those you trusted to me.

CARLOS (*looks first at the letters, then at the* MARQUIS, *in astonishment*).

How!

MARQUIS.

I return them now because they may
Prove safer in thy custody than mine.

CARLOS.

What meanest thou? Has his majesty not read them?
Have they not been before him?

MARQUIS.

What, these letters!

CARLOS.

Thou didst not show them all, then.

MARQUIS.

Who has said
That ever I showed one?

CARLOS (*astonished*).

Can it be so?
Count Lerma ——

MARQUIS.

He! he told thee so! Now all
Is clear as day. But who could have foreseen it?
Lerma! Oh, no, he hath not learned to lie.
'Tis true, the king has all the other letters.

CARLOS (*looks at him long with speechless astonishment*).

But wherefore am I here?

MARQUIS.

For caution's sake,
Lest thou should chance, a second time, to make
An Eboli thy confidant.

CARLOS (*as if waking from a dream*).

Ha! Now
I see it all — all is explained.

MARQUIS (*goes to the door*).

Who's there?

SCENE II.

DUKE ALVA. *The former.*

ALVA (*approaching the* PRINCE *with respect, but turning his back on the* MARQUIS *during the whole scene.*

Prince, you are free. Deputed by the king
I come to tell you so.

[CARLOS *looks at the* MARQUIS *with astonishment. General silence.*

And I, in truth,
Am fortunate to have this honor first ——

CARLOS (*looking at both with extreme amazement, after a pause, to the* DUKE).

I am imprisoned, duke, and set at freedom,
Unconscious of the cause of one or other.

ALVA.

As far as I know, prince, 'twas through an error,
To which the king was driven by a traitor.

CARLOS.

Then am I here by order of the king?

ALVA.

Yes, through an error of his majesty.

CARLOS.

That gives me pain, indeed. But when the king
Commits an error, 'twould beseem the king,
Methinks, to remedy the fault in person.
I am Don Philip's son — and curious eyes
And slanderous looks are on me. What the king
Hath done from sense of duty ne'er will I
Appear to owe to your considerate favor.
I am prepared to appear before the Cortes,
And will not take my sword from such a hand.

ALVA.

The king will never hesitate to grant
Your highness a request so just. Permit
That I conduct you to him.

CARLOS.

Here I stay
Until the king or all Madrid shall come
To lead me from my prison. Take my answer.

[ALVA *withdraws. He is still seen for some time lingering in the court and giving orders to the guards.*

SCENE III.

CARLOS *and* MARQUIS POSA.

CARLOS (*after the departure of the* DUKE, *full of expectation and astonishment, to the* MARQUIS).

What means all this? Inform me, Roderigo —
Art thou not, then, the minister?

MARQUIS.

I was,
As thou canst well perceive ——
[*Going to him with great emotion.*
O Carlos! Now
I have succeeded — yes — it is accomplished —
'Tis over now — Omnipotence be praised,
To whom I owe success.

CARLOS.

Success! What mean you?
Thy words perplex me.

MARQUIS (*takes his hand*).

Carlos! thou art saved —
Art free — but I —— [*He stops short.*

CARLOS.

But thou ——

MARQUIS.

Thus to my breast
I press thee now, with friendship's fullest right,
A right I've bought with all I hold most dear.
How great, how lovely, Carlos, is this moment
Of self-approving joy?

CARLOS.

What sudden change
I mark upon thy features! Proudly now
Thy bosom heaves, thine eyes dart vivid fire!

MARQUIS.

We must say farewell, Carlos! Tremble not,
But be a man! And what thou more shalt hear,
Promise me, not by unavailing sorrow,
Unworthy of great souls, to aggravate
The pangs of parting. I am lost to thee,
Carlos, for many years — fools say forever.
[CARLOS *withdraws his hand, but makes no reply.*
Be thou a man: I've reckoned much on thee —
I have not even shunned to pass with thee
This awful hour — which men, in words of fear,
Have termed the final one. I own it, Carlos,
I joy to pass it thus. Come let us sit —
I feel myself grown weary and exhausted.
[*He approaches* CARLOS, *who is in a lifeless stupor, and allows himself to be involuntarily drawn down by him.*
Where art thou? No reply! I must be brief.
Upon the day that followed our last meeting
At the Carthusian monastery the king
Called me before him. What ensued thou knowest,

And all Madrid. Thou hast not heard, however,
Thy secret even then had reached his ears —
That letters in the queen's possession found
Had testified against thee. This I learned
From his own lips — I was his confidant.
[*He pauses for* CARLOS' *answer, but he still remains silent.*
Yes, Carlos, with my lips I broke my faith —
Guided the plot myself that worked thy ruin.
Thy deed spoke trumpet-tongued; to clear thee fully
'Twas now too late: to frustrate his revenge
Was all that now remained for me; and so
I made myself thy enemy to — serve thee
With fuller power — dost thou not hear me, Carlos,

CARLOS

Go on! go on! I hear thee.

MARQUIS.

To this point
I'm guiltless. But the unaccustomed beams
Of royal favor dazzled me. The rumor,
As I had well foreseen, soon reached thine ears
But by mistaken delicacy led,
And blinded by my vain desire to end
My enterprise alone, I kept concealed
From friendship's ear my hazardous design.
This was my fatal error! Here I failed!
I know it. My self-confidence was madness.
Pardon that confidence — 'twas founded, Carlos,
Upon our friendship's everlasting base.
[*He pauses.* CARLOS *passes from torpid silence to violent agitation.*
That which I feared befel. Unreal dangers
Alarmed your mind. The bleeding queen — the tumult
Within the palace — Lerma's interference —
And, last of all, my own mysterious silence,
Conspired to overwhelm thy heart with wonder.
Thou wavered'st, thought'st me lost; but far too noble
To doubt thy friend's integrity, thy soul
Clothed his defection with a robe of honor,

Nor judged him faithless till it found a motive
To screen and justify his breach of faith.
Forsaken by thy only friend — twas then
Thou sought'st the arms of Princess Eboli —
A demon's arms! 'Twas she betrayed thee, Carlos!
I saw thee fly to her — a dire foreboding
Struck on my heart — I followed thee too late!
Already wert thou prostrate at her feet,
The dread avowal had escaped thy lips —
No way was left to save thee.

CARLOS.

No! her heart
Was moved, thou dost mistake, her heart was moved.

MARQUIS.

Night overspread my mind. No remedy,
No refuge, no retreat was left to me
In nature's boundless compass. Blind despair
Transformed me to a fury — to a tiger —
I raised my dagger to a woman's breast.
But in that moment — in that dreadful moment —
A radiant sunbeam fell upon my soul.
"Could I mislead the king! Could I succeed
In making him think me the criminal!
However improbable, the very guilt
Will be enough to win the king's belief.
I'll dare the task — a sudden thunderbolt
May make the tyrant start — what want I further?
He stops to think, and Carlos thus gains time
To fly to Brussels."

CARLOS.

And hast thou done this?

MARQUIS.

I have despatched a letter to Prince William,
Saying I loved the queen, and had escaped
The king's mistrust in the unjust suspicion
Which falsely fell on thee — that I had found
Means, through the monarch's favor, to obtain
Free access to the queen. I added, further,

That I was fearful of discovery —
That thou hadst learned my secret, and hadst sped
To Princess Eboli, with hopes through her
To warn the queen — that I had made thee prisoner —
And now that all seemed lost, I had resolved
To fly to Brussels. This same letter I ——

CARLOS (*interrupts him, terrified*).

Hast surely not intrusted to the post!
Thou knowest that letters to Brabant and Flanders ——

MARQUIS.

Are given to the king ; and as things go
Taxis would seem to have discharged his duty.

CARLOS.

Heavens! then I'm lost.

MARQUIS.

How lost? What meanest thou?

CARLOS.

And thou, alas! art lost together with me —
This dreadful fraud my father ne'er will pardon.

MARQUIS.

This fraud! Thou'rt mad! Who will disclose it to him?

CARLOS (*regards him with a fixed look*).

Who! Dost thou ask? I will myself.

MARQUIS.

Thou ravest!

Stand back ——

CARLOS.

Away! For heaven's sake hold me not.
While I stay here, he's hiring the assassins.

MARQUIS.

Then is our time more precious — and we still
Have much to say.

CARLOS.

What! Before all is finished?

[*He makes another effort to go. The* MARQUIS *holds him by the arm, and looks at him impressively.*

MARQUIS.

Carlos! was I so scrupulous — so eager —
When thou, a boy, didst shed thy blood for me?

CARLOS (*with emotion, and full of admiration*).

Kind Providence!

MARQUIS.

Reserve thyself for Flanders!
The kingdom is thy destiny — 'tis mine
To give my life for thee.

CARLOS (*takes his hand with deep sensibility*).

No, no! he will not,
Cannot resist a virtue so sublime.
I will conduct thee to him, and together,
Arm linked in arm, will we appear before him.
Then thus will I address him: "Father, see,
This is the way a friend acts towards his friend."
Trust me, 'twill move him — it will touch his heart.
He's not without humanity, — my father.
Yes, it will move him. With hot tears, his eyes
Will overflow — and he will pardon us.

[*A shot is fired through the iron grating.* CARLOS *leaps up.*

CARLOS.

Whom was that meant for?

MARQUIS (*sinking down*).

I believe — for me.

CARLOS (*falling to the earth with a loud cry of grief*).

O God of mercy!

MARQUIS.

He is quick — the king.
I had hoped — a little longer — Carlos — think

Of means of flight — dost hear me? — of thy flight.
Thy mother — knows it all — I can no more. [*Dies.*

[CARLOS *remains by the corpse, like one bereft of life. After some time the* KING *enters, accompanied by many* GRANDEES; *and starts, panic-struck, at the sight. A general and deep silence. The* GRANDEES *range themelves in a semi-circle round them both, and regard the* KING *and his* SON *alternately. The latter continues without any sign of life. The* KING *regards him in thoughtful silence.*

SCENE IV.

The KING, CARLOS, *the* DUKES ALVA, FERIA, *and* MEDINA SIDONIA, PRINCE OF PARMA, COUNT LERMA, DOMINGO, *and numerous* GRANDEES.

KING (*in a gentle tone*).

Thy prayer hath met a gracious hearing, prince,
And here I come, with all the noble peers
Of this my court, to bring thee liberty.

[CARLOS *raises his eyes and looks around him like one awakened from a dream. His eyes are fixed now on the* KING, *now on the corpse; he gives no answer.*

Receive thy sword again. We've been too rash!

[*He approaches him, holds out his hand, and assists him to rise.*

My son's not in his place; Carlos, arise!
Come to thy father's arms! His love awaits thee.

CARLOS (*receives the embrace of the* KING *without any consciousness. Suddenly recollects himself, pauses and looks fixedly at him*).

Thou smell'st of blood — no, I cannot embrace thee!

[*Pushes his father back. All the* GRANDEES *are in commotion.* CARLOS *to them:* —

Nay, stand not there confounded and amazed!
What monstrous action have I done? Defiled
The anointed of the Lord! Oh, fear me not,

I would not lay a hand on him. Behold,
Stamped on his forehead is the damning brand!
The hand of God hath marked him!

KING (*about to go quickly*).

Nobles! follow.

CARLOS.

Whither? You stir not from this spot.
[*Detaining the* KING *forcibly with both hands, while with one he manages to seize the sword which the* KING *has brought with him, and it comes from the scabbard.*

KING.

What! Draw
A sword upon thy father?

ALL THE GRANDEES (*drawing their swords*).

Regicide!

CARLOS (*holding the* KING *firmly with one hand, the naked sword in the other*).

Put up your swords! What! Think you I am mad?
I am not so: or you were much to blame
Thus to remind me, that upon the point
Of this my sword, his trembling life doth hover.
I pray you, stand aloof; for souls like mine
Need soothing. There — hold back! And with the king
What I have yet to settle touches not
Your loyalty. See there — his hand is bloody!
Do you not see it? And now look you here!
[*Pointing to the corpse.*
This hath he done with a well-practised hand.

KING (*to the* GRANDEES, *who press anxiously around him*).

Retire! Why do you tremble? Are we not
Father and son? I will yet wait and see
To what atrocious crime his nature ——

CARLOS.

Nature
I know her not. Murder is now the word!
The bonds of all humanity are severed,

Thine own hands have dissolved them through the realm.
Shall I respect a tie which thou hast scorned?
Oh, see! see here! the foulest deed of blood
That e'er the world beheld. Is there no God
That kings, in his creation, work such havoc?
Is there no God, I ask? Since mother's wombs
Bore children, one alone — and only one —
So guiltlessly hath died. And art thou sensible
What thou hast done? Oh, no! he knows it not:
Knows not that he has robbed — despoiled the world
Of a more noble, precious, dearer life
Than he and all his century can boast.

KING (*with a tone of softness*).

If I have been too hasty, Carlos — thou
For whom I have thus acted, should at least
Not call me to account.

CARLOS.

Is't possible!
Did you then never guess how dear to me
Was he who here lies dead? Thou lifeless corpse!
Instruct him — aid his wisdom, to resolve
This dark enigma now. He was my friend.
And would you know why he has perished thus?
He gave his life for me.

KING.

Ha? my suspicions!

CARLOS.

Pardon, thou bleeding corpse, that I profane
Thy virtue to such ears. But let him blush
With deep-felt shame, the crafty politician,
That his gray-headed wisdom was o'erreached,
E'en by the judgment of a youth. Yes, sire,
We two were brothers! Bound by nobler bands
Than nature ties. His whole life's bright career
Was love. His noble death was love for me.
E'en in the moment when his brief esteem
Exalted you, he was my own. And when
With fascinating tongue he sported with
Your haughty, giant mind, 'twas your conceit

To bridle him; but you became yourself
The pliant tool of his exalted plans.
That I became a prisoner, my arrest,
Was his deep friendship's meditated work.
That letter to Prince William was designed
To save my life. It was the first deceit
He ever practised. To insure my safety
He rushed on death himself, and nobly perished.
You lavished on him all your favor; yet
For me he died. Your heart, your confidence,
You forced upon him. As a toy he held
Your sceptre and your power; he cast them from him,
And gave his life for me.

[*The* KING *stands motionless, with eyes fixed on the ground; all the* GRANDEES *regard him with surprise and alarm.*

How could it be
That you gave credit to this strange deceit?
Meanly indeed he valued you, to try
By such coarse artifice to win his ends.
You dared to court his friendship, but gave way
Before a test so simple. Oh, no! never
For souls like yours was such a being formed.
That well he knew himself, when he rejected
Your crowns, your gifts your greatness, and yourself.
This fine-toned lyre broke in your iron hand,
And you could do no more than murder him.

ALVA (*never having taken his eyes from the* KING, *and observing his emotion with uneasiness, approaches him with apprehension*).

Keep not this deathlike silence, sire. Look round,
And speak at least to us.

CARLOS.

Once you were not
Indifferent to him. And deeply once
You occupied his thoughts. It might have been
His lot to make you happy. His full heart
Might have enriched you; with its mere abundance
An atom of his soul had been enough

To make a god of you. You've robbed yourself —
Plundered yourself and me. What could you give,
To raise again a spirit like to this?

[*Deep silence. Many of the* GRANDEES *turn away, or conceal their faces in their mantles.*

Oh, ye who stand around with terror dumb,
And mute surprise, do not condemn the youth
Who holds this language to the king, his father.
Look on this corpse. Behold! for me he died.
If ye have tears — if in your veins flow blood,
Not molten brass, look here, and blame me not.

[*He turns to the* KING *with more self-possession and calmness.*

Doubtless you wait the end of this rude scene?
Here is my sword, for you are still my king.
Think not I fear your vengeance. Murder me,
As you have murdered this most noble man.
My life is forfeit; that I know full well.
But what is life to me? I here renounce
All that this world can offer to my hopes.
Seek among strangers for a son. Here lies
My kingdom.

[*He sinks down on the corpse, and takes no part in what follows. A confused tumult and the noise of a crowd is heard in the distance. All is deep silence round the* KING. *His eyes scan the circle over, but no one returns his looks.*

KING.

What! Will no one make reply?
Each eye upon the ground, each look abashed!
My sentence is pronounced. I read it here
Proclaimed in all this lifeless, mute demeanor.
My vassals have condemned me.

[*Silence as before. The tumult grows louder. A murmur is heard among the* GRANDEES. *They exchange embarrassed looks.* COUNT LERMA *at length gently touches* ALVA.

LERMA.

Here's rebellion!

ALVA (*in a low voice*).

I fear it.

LERMA.

It approaches! They are coming!

Scene V.

An officer of the Body Guard. The former.

OFFICER (*urgently*).

Rebellion! Where's the king?

[*He makes his way through the crowd up to the* KING.

Madrid's in arms!
To thousands swelled, the soldiery and people
Surround the palace; and reports are spread
That Carlos is a prisoner — that his life
Is threatened. And the mob demand to see
Him living, or Madrid will be in flames.

THE GRANDEES (*with excitement*).

Defend the king!

ALVA (*to the* KING, *who remains quiet and unmoved*).

Fly, sire! your life's in danger.
As yet we know not who has armed the people.

KING (*rousing from his stupor, and advancing with dignity among them*).

Stands my throne firm, and am I sovereign yet
Over this empire? No! I'm king no more.
These cowards weep — moved by a puny boy.
They only wait the signal to desert me.
I am betrayed by rebels!

ALVA.

Dreadful thought!

KING.

There! fling yourselves before him — down before
The young, the expectant king; I'm nothing now
But a forsaken, old, defenceless man!

ALVA.

Spaniards! is't come to this?

[*All crowd round the* KING, *and fall on their knees before him with drawn swords.* CARLOS *remains alone with the corpse, deserted by all.*

KING (*tearing off his mantle and throwing it from him*).

There! clothe him now
With this my royal mantle; and on high
Bear him in triumph o'er my trampled corpse!

[*He falls senseless in* ALVA'S *and* LERMA'S *arms.*

LERMA.

For heaven's sake, help!

FERIA.

Oh, sad, disastrous chance!

LERMA.

He faints!

ALVA (*leaves the* KING *in* LERMA'S *and* FERIA'S *hands*).

Attend his majesty! whilst I
Make it my aim to tranquillize Madrid.

[*Exit* ALVA. *The* KING *is borne off, attended by all the grandees.*

SCENE VI.

CARLOS *remains behind with the corpse. After a few moments* LOUIS MERCADO *appears, looks cautiously round him, and stands a long time silent behind the* PRINCE, *who does not observe him.*

MERCADO.

I come, prince, from her majesty the queen.

[CARLOS *turns away and makes no reply.*

My name, Mercado, I'm the queen's physician:
See my credentials.

[*Shows the* PRINCE *a signet ring.* CARLOS *remains still silent.*

And the queen desires
To speak with you to-day — on weighty business.

CARLOS.

Nothing is weighty in this world to me.

MERCADO.

A charge the Marquis Posa left with her.

CARLOS (*looking up quickly*).

Indeed! I come this instant.

MERCADO.

No, not yet,
Most gracious prince! you must delay till night.
Each avenue is watched, the guards are doubled,
You ne'er could reach the palace unperceived;
You would endanger everything.

CARLOS.

And yet ——

MERCADO.

I know one means alone that can avail us.
'Tis the queen's thought, and she suggests it to you;
But it is bold, adventurous, and strange!

CARLOS.

What is it?

MERCADO.

A report has long prevailed
That in the secret vaults, beneath the palace,
At midnight, shrouded in a monk's attire,
The emperor's departed spirit walks.
The people still give credit to the tale,
And the guards watch the post with inward terror.
Now, if you but determine to assume
This dress, you may pass freely through the guards,
Until you reach the chamber of the queen,
Which this small key will open. Your attire
Will save you from attack. But on the spot,
Prince! your decision must be made at once.
The requisite apparel and the mask
Are ready in your chamber. I must haste
And take the queen your answer.

CARLOS.

And the hour?

MERCADO.

It is midnight.

CARLOS.

Then inform her I will come.

[*Exit* MERCADO.

SCENE VII.

CARLOS *and* COUNT LERMA.

LERMA.

Save yourself, prince! The king's enraged against you.
Your liberty, if not your life's in danger!
Ask me no further — I have stolen away
To give you warning — fly this very instant

CARLOS.

Heaven will protect me!

LERMA.

As the queen observed
To me, this moment, you must leave Madrid
This very day, and fly to Brussels, prince.
Postpone it not, I pray you. The commotion
Favors your flight. The queen, with this design,
Has raised it. No one will presume so far
As to lay hand on you. Swift steeds await you
At the Carthusian convent, and behold,
Here are your weapons, should you be attacked.

[LERMA *gives him a dagger and pistols.*

CARLOS.

Thanks, thanks, Count Lerma!

LERMA.

This day's sad event
Has moved my inmost soul! No faithful friend
Will ever love like him. No patriot breathes
But weeps for you. More now I dare not say.

CARLOS.

Count Lerma! he who's gone considered you
A man of honor.

LERMA.

Farewell, prince, again!
Success attend you! Happier times will come —
But I shall be no more. Receive my homage!

[*Falls on one knee.*

CARLOS (*endeavors to prevent him, with much emotion*).

Not so — not so, count! I am too much moved —
I would not be unmanned!

LERMA (*kissing his hand with feeling*).

My children's king!
To die for you will be their privilege!
It is not mine, alas! But in those children
Remember me! Return in peace to Spain.
May you on Philip's throne feel as a man,
For you have learned to suffer! Undertake
No bloody deed against your father, prince!
Philip compelled his father to yield up
The throne to him; and this same Philip now
Trembles at his own son. Think, prince, of that!
And may Heaven prosper and direct your path!

[*Exit quickly.* CARLOS *about to hasten away by another side, but turns rapidly round, and throws himself down before the corpse, which he again folds in his arms. He then hurries from the room.*

SCENE VIII.

The KING'S *Antechamber.*

DUKE ALVA *and* DUKE FERIA *enter in conversation.*

ALVA.

The town is quieted. How is the king?

FERIA.

In the most fearful state. Within his chamber
He is shut up, and whatso'er may happen
He will admit no person to his presence.
The treason of the marquis has at once
Changed his whole nature. We no longer know him.

ALVA.

I must go to him, nor respect his feelings.
A great discovery which I have made ——

FERIA.

A new discovery!

ALVA.

A Carthusian monk
My guards observed, with stealthy footsteps, creep
Into the prince's chamber, and inquire
With anxious curiosity, about
The Marquis Posa's death. They seized him straight,
And questioned him. Urged by the fear of death,
He made confession that he bore about him
Papers of high importance, which the marquis
Enjoined him to deliver to the prince,
If, before sunset, he should not return.

FERIA.

Well, and what further?

ALVA.

These same letters state
That Carlos from Madrid must fly before
The morning dawn.

FERIA.

Indeed!

ALVA.

And that a ship at Cadiz lies
Ready for sea, to carry him to Flushing.
And that the Netherlands but wait his presence,
To shake the Spanish fetters from their arms.

FERIA.

Can this be true?

ALVA.

And other letters say
A fleet of Soliman's will sail for Rhodes,
According to the treaty, to attack
The Spanish squadron in the Midland seas.

FERIA.

Impossible.

ALVA.

And hence I understand
The object of the journeys, which of late
The marquis made through Europe. 'Twas no less
Than to rouse all the northern powers to arms
In aid of Flanders' freedom.

FERIA.

Was it so?

ALVA.

There is besides appended to these letters
The full concerted plan of all the war
Which is to disunite from Spain's control
The Netherlands forever. Naught omitted;
The power and opposition close compared;
All the resources accurately noted,
Together with the maxims to be followed,
And all the treaties which they should conclude.
The plan is fiendish, but 'tis no less splendid

FERIA.

The deep, designing traitor!

ALVA.

And, moreover,
There is allusion made, in these same letters,
To some mysterious conference the prince
Must with his mother hold upon the eve
Preceding his departure.

FERIA.

That must be
This very day.

ALVA.

At midnight. But for this
I have already taken proper steps.
You see the case is pressing. Not a moment
Is to be lost. Open the monarch's chamber.

FERIA.

Impossible! All entrance is forbidden.

ALVA.

I'll open then myself; the increasing danger
Must justify my boldness.

[*As he is on the point of approaching the door it opens, and the* KING *comes out.*

FERIA.

'Tis himself!

Scene IX.

The King. *The preceding.*

All are alarmed at his appearance, fall back, and let him pass through them. He appears to be in a waking dream, like a sleep-walker. His dress and figure indicate the disorder caused by his late fainting. With slow steps he walks past the Grandees *and looks at each with a fixed eye, but without recognizing any of them. At last he stands still, wrapped in thought, his eyes fixed on the ground, till the emotions of his mind gradually express themselves in words.*

KING.

Restore me back the dead! Yes, I must have him.

DOMINGO (*whispering to* ALVA).

Speak to him, duke.

KING.

He died despising me!
Have him again I must, and make him think
More nobly of me.

ALVA (*approaching with fear*).

Sire!

KING (*looking round the circle*).

Who speaks to me!
Have you forgotten who I am? Why not
Upon your knees, before your king, ye creatures!
Am I not still your king? I must command
Submission from you. Do you all then slight me
Because one man despised me?

ALVA.

Gracious king!
No more of him: a new and mightier foe
Arises in the bosom of your realm.

FERIA.

Prince Carlos ——

KING.

Had a friend who died for him;
For him! With me he might have shared an empire

How he looked down upon me! From the throne
Kings look not down so proudly. It was plain,
How vain his conquest made him. His keen sorrow
Confessed how great his loss. Man weeps not so
For aught that's perishable. Oh, that he might
But live again! I'd give my Indies for it!
Omnipotence! thou bring'st no comfort to me:
Thou canst not stretch thine arm into the grave
To rectify one little act, committed
With hasty rashness, 'gainst the life of man.
The dead return no more. Who dare affirm
That I am happy? In the tomb he dwells,
Who scorned to flatter me. What care I now
For all who live? One spirit, one free being,
And one alone, arose in all this age!
He died despising me!

ALVA.

Our lives are useless!
Spaniards, let's die at once! E'en in the grave
This man still robs us of our monarch's heart.

KING (*sits down, and leans his head on his arm*).

Oh! had he died for me! I loved him, too,
And much. Dear to me was he as a son.
In his young mind there brightly rose for me
A new and beauteous morning. Who can say
What I had destined for him? He to me
Was a first love. All Europe may condemn me,
Europe may overwhelm me with its curse,
But I deserved his thanks.

DOMINGO.

What spell is this?

KING.

And, say, for whom did he desert me thus?
A boy, — my son? Oh, no, believe it not!
A Posa would not perish for a boy;
The scanty flame of friendship could not fill
A Posa's heart. It beat for human kind.
His passion was the world, and the whole course
Of future generations yet unborn.

To do them service he secured a throne —
And lost it. Such high treason 'gainst mankind
Could Posa e'er forgive himself? Oh, no;
I know his feelings better. Not that he
Carlos preferred to Philip, but the youth —
The tender pupil, — to the aged monarch.
The father's evening sunbeam could not ripen
His novel projects. He reserved for this
The young son's orient rays. Oh, 'tis undoubted,
They wait for my decease.

ALVA.

And of your thoughts,
Read in these letters strongest confirmation.

KING.

'Tis possible he may miscalculate.
I'm still myself. Thanks, Nature, for thy gifts;
I feel within my frame the strength of youth;
I'll turn their schemes to mockery. His virtue
Shall be an empty dream — his death, a fool's.
His fall shall crush his friend and age together.
We'll test it now — how they can do without me.
The world is still for one short evening mine,
And this same evening will I so employ,
That no reformer yet to come shall reap
Another harvest, in the waste I'll leave,
For ten long generations after me.
He would have offered me a sacrifice
To his new deity — humanity!
So on humanity I'll take revenge.
And with his puppet I'll at once commence.
[*To the* DUKE ALVA.
What you have now to tell me of the prince,
Repeat. What tidings do these letters bring?

ALVA.

These letters, sire, contain the last bequest
Of Posa to Prince Carlos.

KING (*reads the papers, watched by all present. He then lays them aside and walks in silence up and down the room*).

Summon straight
The cardinal inquisitor; and beg
He will bestow an hour upon the king,
This very night!

TAXIS.

Just on the stroke of two
The horses must be ready and prepared,
At the Carthusian monastery.

ALVA.

Spies
Despatched by me, moreover, have observed
Equipments at the convent for a journey,
On which the prince's arms were recognized.

FERIA.

And it is rumored that large sums are raised
In the queen's name, among the Moorish agents,
Destined for Brussels.

KING.

Where is Carlos?

ALVA.

With Posa's body.

KING.

And there are lights as yet
Within the queen's apartments?

ALVA.

Everything
Is silent there. She has dismissed her maids
Far earlier than as yet has been her custom.
The Duchess of Arcos, who was last with her,
Left her in soundest sleep.

[*An officer of the Body Guard enters, takes the* DUKE OF FERIA *aside, and whispers to him. The latter, struck with surprise, turns to* DUKE ALVA. *The others crowd round him, and a murmuring noise arises.*

FERIA, TAXIS, *and* DOMINGO (*at the same time*).

'Tis wonderful!

KING.

What is the matter!

FERIA.

News scarce credible!

DOMINGO.

Two soldiers, who have just returned from duty,
Report — but — oh, the tale's ridiculous!

KING.

What do they say?

ALVA.

They say, in the left wing
Of the queen's palace, that the emperor's ghost
Appeared before them, and with solemn gait
Passed on. This rumor is confirmed by all
The sentinels, who through the whole pavilion
Their watches keep. And they, moreover, add,
The phantom in the queen's apartment vanished.

KING.

And in what shape appeared it?

OFFICER.

In the robes,
The same attire he in Saint Justi wore
For the last time, apparelled as a monk.

KING.

A monk! And did the sentries know his person
Whilst he was yet alive? They could not else
Determine that it was the emperor.

OFFICER.

The sceptre which he bore was evidence
It was the emperor.

DOMINGO.

And the story goes
He often has been seen in this same dress.

KING.

Did no one speak to him?

OFFICER.

No person dared.
The sentries prayed, and let him pass in silence.

KING.

The phantom vanished in the queen's apartments!

OFFICER.

In the queen's antechamber. [*General silence.*

KING (*turns quickly round*).

What say you?

ALVA.

Sire! we are silent.

KING (*after some thought, to the* OFFICER).

Let my guards be ready
And under arms, and order all approach
To that wing of the palace to be stopped.
I fain would have a word with this same ghost.
[*Exit* OFFICER. *Enter a* PAGE.

PAGE.

The cardinal inquisitor.

KING (*to all present*).

Retire!

[*The* CARDINAL INQUISITOR, *an old man of ninety, and blind, enters, supported on a staff, and led by two Dominicans. The* GRANDEES *fall on their knees as he passes, and touch the hem of his garment. He gives them his blessing, and they depart.*

SCENE X.

The KING *and the* GRAND INQUISITOR. *A long silence.*

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Say, do I stand before the king?

KING.

You do.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

I never thought it would be so again!

KING.

I now renew the scenes of early youth,
When Philip sought his sage instructor's counsel.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Your glorious sire, my pupil, Charles the Fifth,
Nor sought or needed counsel at my hands.

KING.

So much happier he! I, cardinal,
Am guilty of a murder, and no rest ——

GRAND INQUISITOR.

What was the reason for this murder?

KING.

'Twas
A fraud unparalleled ——

GRAND INQUISITOR.

I know it all.

KING.

What do you know? Through whom, and since what time?

GRAND INQUISITOR.

For years — what you have only learned since sunset.

KING (*with astonishment*).

You know this man then!

GRAND INQUISITOR.

All his life is noted
From its commencement to its sudden close,
In Santa Casa's holy registers.

KING.

Yet he enjoyed his liberty!

GRAND INQUISITOR.

The chain
With which he struggled, but which held him bound,
Though long, was firm, nor easy to be severed.

KING.

He has already been beyond the kingdom.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Where'er he travelled I was at his side.

KING (*walks backwards and forwards in displeasure*).

You knew the hands, then, I had fallen into;
And yet delayed to warn me!

GRAND INQUISITOR.

This rebuke
I pay you back. Why did you not consult us
Before you sought the arms of such a man?
You knew him: one sole glance unmasked him to you.
Why did you rob the office of its victim?
Are we thus trifled with! When majesty
Can stoop to such concealment, and in secret,
Behind our backs, league with our enemies,
What must our fate be then? If one be spared
What plea can justify the fate of thousands?

KING.

But he, no less, has fallen a sacrifice.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

No; he is murdered — basely, foully murdered.
The blood that should so gloriously have flowed
To honor us has stained the assassin's hand.
What claim had you to touch our sacred rights?
He but existed, by our hands to perish.
God gave him to this age's exigence,
To perish, as a terrible example,
And turn high-vaunting reason into shame.
Such was my long-laid plan — behold, destroyed
In one brief hour, the toil of many years.
We are defrauded, and your only gain
Is bloody hands.

KING.

Passion impelled me to it.
Forgive me.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Passion! And does royal Philip
Thus answer me? Have I alone grown old?
[*Shaking his head angrily.*
Passion! Make conscience free within your realms,
If you're a slave yourself.

KING.

In things like this
I'm but a novice. Bear in patience with me.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

No, I'm ill pleased with you — to see you thus
Tarnish the bygone glories of your reign.
Where is that Philip, whose unchanging soul,
Fixed as the polar star in heaven above,
Round its own axis still pursued its course?
Is all the memory of preceding years
Forever gone? And did the world become
New moulded when you stretched your hand to him?
Was poison no more poison? Did distinction
'Twixt good and evil, truth and falsehood, vanish?
What then is resolution? What is firmness?
What is the faith of man, if in one weak,
Unguarded hour, the rules of threescore years
Dissolve in air, like woman's fickle favor?

KING.

I looked into his eyes. Oh, pardon me
This weak relapse into mortality.
The world has one less access to your heart;
Your eyes are sunk in night.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

What did this man
Want with you? What new thing could he adduce,
You did not know before? And are you versed
So ill with fanatics and innovators?
Does the reformer's vaunting language sound
So novel to your ears? If the firm edifice
Of your conviction totters to mere words,
Should you not shudder to subscribe the fate

Of many thousand poor, deluded souls
Who mount the flaming pile for nothing worse?

KING.

I sought a human being. These Domingos ——

GRAND INQUISITOR.

How! human beings! What are they to you?
Cyphers to count withal — no more! Alas!
And must I now repeat the elements
Of kingly knowledge to my gray-haired pupil?
An earthly god must learn to bear the want
Of what may be denied him. When you whine
For sympathy is not the world your equal?
What rights should you possess above your equals?

KING (*throwing himself into a chair*).

I'm a mere suffering mortal, that I feel;
And you demand from me, a wretched creature,
What the Creator only can perform.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

No, sire; I am not thus to be deceived.
I see you through. You would escape from us.
The church's heavy chains pressed hard upon you;
You would be free, and claim your independence.
[*He pauses. The* KING *is silent.*
We are avenged. Be thankful to the church,
That checks you with the kindness of a mother.
The erring choice you were allowed to make
Has proved your punishment. You stand reproved!
Now you may turn to us again. And know
If I, this day, had not been summoned here,
By Heaven above! before to-morrow's sun,
You would yourself have stood at my tribunal!

KING.

Forbear this language, priest. Restrain thyself.
I'll not endure it from thee. In such tones
No tongue shall speak to me.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Then why, O king!
Call up the ghost of Samuel? I've anointed

Two monarchs to the throne of Spain. I hoped
To leave behind a firm-established work.
I see the fruit of all my life is lost.
Don Philip's hands have shattered what I built.
But tell me, sire, wherefore have I been summoned?
What do I hear? I am not minded, king,
To seek such interviews again.

KING.

But one —
One service more — the last — and then in peace
Depart. Let all the past be now forgotten —
Let peace be made between us. We are friends.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

When Philip bends with due humility.

KING (*after a pause*).

My son is meditating treason.

GRAND INQUISITOR,

Well!
And what do you resolve?

KING.

On all, or nothing.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

What mean you by this all?

KING.

He must escape,
Or die.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Well, sire! decide.

KING.

And can you not
Establish some new creed to justify
The bloody murder of one's only son?

GRAND INQUISITOR.

To appease eternal justice God's own Son
Expired upon the cross.

KING.

And can you spread
This creed throughout all Europe?

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Ay, as far
As the true cross is worshipped.

KING.

But I sin —
Sin against nature. Canst thou, by thy power,
Silence her mighty voice.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

The voice of nature
Avails not over faith.

KING.

My right to judge
I place within your hands. Can I retrace
The step once taken?

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Give him to me!

KING.

My only son! For whom then have I labored?

GRAND INQUISITOR.

For the grave rather than for liberty!

KING (*rising up*).

We are agreed. Come with me.

GRAND INQUISITOR.

Monarch! Whither!

KING.

From his own father's hands to take the victim.

[*Leads him away.*

Scene XI.

Queen's Apartment.

Carlos. *The* Queen. *Afterwards the* King *and attendants.* Carlos *in monk's attire, a mask over his face, which he is just taking off; under his arm a naked sword. It is quite dark. He approaches a door, which is in the act of opening. The* Queen *comes out in her night-dress with a lighted candle.* Carlos *falls on one knee before her.*

CARLOS.

Elizabeth!

QUEEN (*regarding him with silent sorrow*).

Do we thus meet again?

CARLOS.

'Tis thus we meet again! [*A silence.*

QUEEN (*endeavoring to collect herself*).

Carlos, arise!
We must not now unnerve each other thus.
The mighty dead will not be honored now
By fruitless tears. Tears are for petty sorrows!
He gave himself for thee! With his dear life
He purchased thine. And shall this precious blood
Flow for a mere delusion of the brain?
Oh, Carlos, I have pledged myself for thee.
On that assurance did he flee from hence
More satisfied. Oh, do not falsify
My word.

CARLOS (*with animation*)

To him I'll raise a monument
Nobler than ever honored proudest monarch,
And o'er his dust a paradise shall bloom!

QUEEN.

Thus did I hope to find thee! This was still
The mighty purpose of his death. On me
Devolves the last fulfilment of his plans,
And I will now fulfil my solemn oath.
Yet one more legacy your dying friend
Bequeathed to me. I pledged my word to him,

And wherefore should I now conceal it from you?
To me did he resign his Carlos — I
Defy suspicion, and no longer tremble
Before mankind, but will for once assume
The courage of a friend. My heart shall speak.
He called our passion — virtue! I believe him,
And will my heart no longer ——

CARLOS.

Hold, O queen!
Long was I sunk in a delusive dream.
I loved, but now I am at last awake:
Forgotten be the past. Here are your letters, —
Destroy my own. Fear nothing from my passion,
It is extinct. A brighter flame now burns,
And purifies my being. All my love
Lies buried in the grave. No mortal wish
Finds place within this bosom.
[*After a pause, taking her hand.*
I have come
To bid farewell to you, and I have learned
There is a higher, greater good, my mother,
Than to call thee mine own. One rapid night
Has winged the tardy progress of my years,
And prematurely ripened me to manhood.
I have no further business in the world,
But to remember him. My harvest now
Is ended.
[*He approaches the* QUEEN, *who conceals her face.*
Mother! will you not reply!

QUEEN.

Carlos! regard not these my tears. I cannot
Restrain them. But believe me I admire you.

CARLOS.

Thou wert the only partner of our league:
And by this name thou shalt remain to me
The most beloved object in this world.
No other woman can my friendship share,
More than she yesterday could win my love.

But sacred shall the royal widow be,
Should Providence conduct me to the throne.
[*The* KING, *accompanied by the* GRAND INQUISITOR, *appears in the background without being observed.*
I hasten to leave Spain, and never more
Shall I behold my father in this world.
No more I love him. Nature is extinct
Within this breast. Be you again his wife —
His son's forever lost to him! Return
Back to your course of duty — I must speed
To liberate a people long oppressed
From a fell tyrant's hand. Madrid shall hail
Carlos as king, or ne'er behold him more.
And now a long and last farewell —— [*He kisses her.*

QUEEN.

Oh, Carlos!
How you exalt me! but I dare not soar
To such a height of greatness: — yet I may
Contemplate now your noble mind with wonder.

CARLOS.

Am I not firm, Elizabeth? I hold thee
Thus in my arms and tremble not. The fear
Of instant death had, yesterday, not torn me
From this dear spot. [*He leaves her.*
All that is over now,
And I defy my mortal destinies.
I've held thee in these arms and wavered not.
Hark! Heard you nothing! [*A clock strikes.*

QUEEN.

Nothing but the bell
That tolls the moment of our separation.

CARLOS.

Good night, then, mother! And you shall, from Ghent,
Receive a letter, which will first proclaim
Our secret enterprise aloud. I go
To dare King Philip to an open contest.
Henceforth there shall be naught concealed between us!

You need not shun the aspect of the world.
Be this my last deceit.

[*About to take up the mask — the* KING *stands between them.*

KING.

It is thy last.

[*The* QUEEN *falls senseless.*

CARLOS (*hastens to her and supports her in his arms*).

Is the queen dead? Great heavens!

KING (*coolly and quietly to the* GRAND INQUISITOR).

Lord Cardinal!
I've done *my* part. Go now, and do your own. [*Exit.*

DEMETRIUS

ACT I.

SCENE I.

THE DIET AT CRACOW.

On the rising of the curtain the Polish Diet is discovered, seated in the great senate hall. On a raised platform, elevated by three steps, and surmounted by a canopy, is the imperial throne, the escutcheons of Poland and Lithuania suspended on each side. The KING *seated upon the throne; on his right and left hand his ten royal officers standing on the platform. Below the platform the* BISHOPS, PALATINES, *and* CASTELLANS *seated on each side of the stage. Opposite to these stand the Provincial* DEPUTIES, *in a double line, uncovered. All armed. The* ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN, *as the primate of the kingdom, is seated next the proscenium; his chaplain behind him, bearing a golden cross.*

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN.

Thus then hath this tempestuous Diet been
Conducted safely to a prosperous close;
And king and commons part as cordial friends.
The nobles have consented to disarm,
And straight disband the dangerous Rocoss;*
Whilst our good king his sacred word has pledged,
That every just complaint shall have redress.
And now that all is peace at home, we may
Look to the things that claim our care abroad.
Is it the will of the most high Estates
That Prince Demetrius, who hath advaneed
A claim to Russia's crown, as Ivan's son,
Should at their bar appear, and in the face
Of this august assembly prove his right?

* An insurrectionary muster of the nobles.

CASTELLAN OF CRACOW.
Honor and justice both demand he should;
It were unseemly to refuse his prayer.
BISHOP OF WERMELAND.
The documents on which he rests have been
Examined, and are found authentic. We
May give him audience.
SEVERAL DEPUTIES. Nay! We must we must!
LEO SAPIEHA.
To hear is to admit his right.
ODOWALSKY. And not
To hear is to reject his claims unheard.
ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN.
Is it your will that he have audience?
I ask it for the second time — and third.
IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR.
Let him stand forth before our throne!
SENATORS. And speak!
DEPUTIES. Yes, yes! Let him be heard!
[*The Imperial* GRAND MARSHAL *beckons with his baton to the doorkeeper, who goes out.*
LEO SAPIEHA (*to the* CHANCELLOR).
Write down, my lord,
That here I do protest against this step,
And all that may ensue therefrom, to mar
The peace of Poland's state and Moscow's crown.
[*Enters* DEMETRIUS. *Advances some steps towards the throne, and makes three bows with his head uncovered, first to the* KING, *next to the* SENATORS, *and then to the* DEPUTIES, *who all severally answer with an inclination of the head. He then takes up his position so as to keep within his eye a great portion of the assemblage, and yet not to turn his back upon the throne.*
ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN.
Prince Dmitri, son of Ivan! if the pomp
Of this great Diet scare thee, or a sight
So noble and majestic chain thy tongue,
Thou may'st — for this the senate have allowed —
Choose thee a proxy, wheresoe'er thou list,
And do thy mission by another's lips.

DEMETRIUS.

My lord archbishop, I stand here to claim
A kingdom, and the state of royalty.
'Twould ill beseem me should I quake before
A noble people, and its king and senate.
I ne'er have viewed a circle so august,
But the sight swells my heart within my breast
And not appals me. The more worthy ye,
To me ye are more welcome; I can ne'er
Address my claim to nobler auditory.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN.

. . . The august republic
Is favorably bent. . . .

DEMETRIUS.

Most puissant king! Most worthy and most potent
Bishops and palatines, and my good lords,
The deputies of the august republic!
It gives me pause and wonder to behold
Myself, Czar Ivan's son, now stand before
The Polish people in their Diet here.
Both realms were sundered by a bloody hate,
And, whilst my father lived, no peace might be.
Yet now hath Heaven so ordered these events,
That I, his blood, who with my nurse's milk
Imbibed the ancestral hate, appear before you
A fugitive, compelled to seek my rights
Even here in Poland's heart. Then, ere I speak,
Forget magnanimously all rancors past,
And that the Czar, whose son I own myself,
Rolled war's red billows to your very homes.
I stand before you, sirs, a prince despoiled.
I ask protection. The oppressed may urge
A sacred claim on every noble breast.
And who in all earth's circuit shall be just,
If not a people great and valiant, — one
In plenitude of power so free, it needs
To render 'count but to itself alone,
And may, unchallenged, lend an open ear
And aiding hand to fair humanity.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN.

You do allege you are Czar Ivan's son;

And truly, nor your bearing nor your speech
Gainsays the lofty title that you urge,
But shows us that you are indeed his son.
And you shall find that the republic bears
A generous spirit. She has never quailed
To Russia in the field! She loves, alike,
To be a noble foe — a cordial friend.

DEMETRIUS. Ivan Wasilowitch, the mighty Czar
Of Moscow, took five spouses to his bed,
In the long years that spared him to the throne.
The first, a lady of the heroic line
Of Romanoff, bare him Feodor, who reigned
After his father's death. One only son,
Dmitri, the last blossom of his strength,
And a mere infant when his father died,
Was born of Marfa, of Nagori's line.
Czar Feodor, a youth, alike effeminate
In mind and body, left the reins of power
To his chief equerry, Borïs Godunow,
Who ruled his master with most crafty skill.
Feodor was childless, and his barren bride
Denied all prospect of an heir. Thus, when
The wily Boiar, by his fawning arts,
Had coiled himself into the people's favor,
His wishes soared as high as to the throne.
Between him and his haughty hopes there stood
A youthful prince, the young Demetrius
Iwanowitsch, who with his mother lived
At Uglitsch, where her widowhood was passed.
Now, when his fatal purpose was matured,
He sent to Uglitsch ruffians, charged to put
The Czarowitsch to death.
One night, when all was hushed, the castle's wing,
Where the young prince, apart from all the rest,
With his attendants lay, was found on fire.
The raging flames ingulfed the pile; the prince
Unseen, unheard, was spirited away,
And all the world lamented him as dead.
All Moscow knows these things to be the truth.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN.
Yes, these are facts familiar to us all.

The rumor ran abroad, both far and near,
That Prince Demetrius perished in the flames
When Uglitsch was destroyed. And, as his death
Raised to the throne the Czar who fills it now,
Fame did not hesitate to charge on him
This murder foul and pitiless. But yet,
His death is not the business now in hand!
This prince is living still! He lives in you!
So runs your plea. Now bring us to the proofs!
Whereby do you attest that you are he?
What are the signs by which you shall be known?
How 'scaped you those were sent to hunt you down
And now, when sixteen years are passed, and you
Well nigh forgot, emerge to light once more?

DEMETRIUS.

'Tis scarce a year since I have known myself;
I lived a secret to myself till then,
Surmising naught of my imperial birth.
I was a monk with monks, close pent within
The cloister's precints, when I first began
To waken to a consciousness of self.
My impetuous spirit chafed against the bars,
And the high blood of princes began to course
In strange unbidden moods along my veins.
At length I flung the monkish cowl aside,
And fled to Poland, where the noble Prince
Of Sendomir, the generous, the good,
Took me as guest into his princely house,
And trained me up to noble deeds of arms.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN.

How? You still ignorant of what you were?
Yet ran the rumor then on every side,
That Prince Demetrius was still alive.
Czar Boris trembled on his throne, and sent
His sassafs to the frontiers, to keep
Sharp watch on every traveller that stirred.
Had not the tale its origin with you?
Did you not give the rumor birth yourself?
Had you not named to any that you were
Demetrius?

DEMETRIUS. I relate that which I know.
If a report went forth I was alive,
Then had some god been busy with the fame.
Myself I knew not. In the prince's house,
And in the throng of his retainers lost,
I spent the pleasant springtime of my youth.
In silent homage
My heart was vowed to his most lovely daughter.
Yet in those days it never dreamed to raise
Its wildest thoughts to happiness so high.
My passion gave offence to her bethrothed,
The Castellan of Lemberg. He with taunts
Chafed me, and in the blindness of his rage
Forgot himself so wholly as to strike me.
Thus savagely provoked, I drew my sword;
He, blind with fury, rushed upon the blade,
And perished there by my unwitting hand.

MEISCHEK.
Yes, it was even so.

DEMETRIUS.
Mine was the worst mischance! A nameless youth,
A Russian and a stranger, I had slain
A grandee of the empire — in the house
Of my kind patron done a deed of blood,
And sent to death his son-in-law and friend.
My innocence availed not; not the pity
Of all his household, nor his kindness — his,
The noble Palatine's, — could save my life;
For it was forfeit to the law, that is,
Though lenient to the Poles, to strangers stern.
Judgment was passed on me — that judgment death.
I knelt upon the scaffold, by the block;
To the fell headsman's sword I bared my throat,
And in the act disclosed a cross of gold,
Studded with precious gems, which had been hung
About my neck at the baptismal font.
This sacred pledge of Christian redemption
I had, as is the custom of my people,
Worn on my neck concealed, where'er I went,
From my first hours of infancy; and now,
When from sweet life I was compelled to part,

I grasped it as my only stay, and pressed it
With passionate devotion to my lips.
[*The Poles intimate their sympathy by dumb show.*
The jewel was observed; its sheen and worth
Awakened curiosity and wonder.
They set me free, and questioned me; yet still
I could not call to memory a time
I had not worn the jewel on my person.
Now it so happened that three Boiars who
Had fled from the resentment of their Czar
Were on a visit to my lord at Sambor.
They saw the trinket, — recognized it by
Nine emeralds alternately inlaid
With amethysts, to be the very cross
Which Ivan Westislowsky at the font
Hung on the neck of the Czar's youngest son.
They scrutinized me closer, and were struck
To find me marked with one of nature's freaks,
For my right arm is shorter than my left.
Now, being closely plied with questions, I
Bethought me of a little psalter which
I carried from the cloister when I fled.
Within this book were certain words in Greek
Inscribed there by the Igumen himself.
What they imported was unknown to me,
Being ignorant of the language. Well, the psalter
Was sent for, brought, and the inscription read.
It bore that Brother Wasili Philaret
(Such was my cloister-name), who owned the book,
Was Prince Demetrius, Ivan's youngest son,
By Andrei, an honest Diak, saved
By stealth in that red night of massacre.
Proofs of the fact lay carefully preserved
Within two convents, which were pointed out.
On this the Boiars at my feet fell down,
Won by the force of these resistless proofs,
And hailed me as the offspring of their Czar.
So from the yawning gulfs of black despair
Fate raised me up to fortune's topmost heights.
And now the mists cleared off, and all at once
Memories on memories started into life

In the remotest background of the past.
And like some city's spires that gleam afar
In golden sunshine when naught else is seen,
So in my soul two images grew bright,
The loftiest sun-peaks in the shadowy past.
I saw myself escaping one dark night,
And a red lurid flame light up the gloom
Of midnight darkness as I looked behind me
A memory 'twas of very earliest youth,
For what preceded or came after it
In the long distance utterly was lost.
In solitary brightness there it stood
A ghastly beacon-light on memory's waste.
Yet I remembered how, in later years,
One of my comrades called me, in his wrath
Son of the Czar. I took it as a jest,
And with a blow avenged it at the time.
All this now flashed like lightning on my soul,
And told with dazzling certainty that I
Was the Czar's son, so long reputed dead.
With this one word the clouds that had perplexed
My strange and troubled life were cleared away.
Nor merely by these signs, for such deceive;
But in my soul, in my proud, throbbing heart
I felt within me coursed the blood of kings;
And sooner will I drain it drop by drop
Than bate one jot my title to the crown.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN.

And shall we trust a scroll which might have found
Its way by merest chance into your hands
Backed by the tale of some poor renegades?
Forgive me, noble youth! Your tone, I grant,
And bearing, are not those of one who lies;
Still you in this may be yourself deceived.
Well may the heart be pardoned that beguiles
Itself in playing for so high a stake.
What hostage do you tender for your word?

DEMETRIUS.

I tender fifty, who will give their oaths, —
All Piasts to a man, and free-born Poles
Of spotless reputation, — each of whom

Is ready to enforce what I have urged.
There sits the noble Prince of Sendomir,
And at his side the Castellan of Lublin;
Let them declare if I have spoke the truth.

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN.

How seem these things to the august Estates?
To the enforcement of such numerous proofs
Doubt and mistrust, methinks, must needs give way.
Long has a creeping rumor filled the world
That Dmitri, Ivan's son, is still alive.
The Czar himself confirms it by his fears.
— Before us stands a youth, in age and mien
Even to the very freak that nature played,
The lost heir's counterpart, and of a soul
Whose noble stamp keeps rank with his high claims.
He left a cloister's precincts, urged by strange,
Mysterious promptings; and this monk-trained boy
Was straight distinguished for his knightly feats.
He shows a trinket which the Czarowitsch
Once wore, and one that never left his side;
A written witness, too, by pious hands,
Gives us assurance of his princely birth;
And, stronger still, from his unvarnished speech
And open brow truth makes his best appeal.
Such traits as these deceit doth never don;
It masks its subtle soul in vaunting words,
And in the high-glossed ornaments of speech.
No longer, then, can I withhold the title
Which he with circumstance and justice claims
And, in the exercise of my old right,
I now, as primate, give him the first voice.

ARCHBISHOP OF LEMBERG.

My voice goes with the primate's.

SEVERAL VOICES. So does mine.

SEVERAL PALATINES.

And mine!

ODOWALSKY. And mine.

DEPUTIES. And all!

SAPIEHA. My gracious sirs!
Weigh well ere you decide! Be not so hasty!

It is not meet the council of the realm
Be hurried on to ——

ODOWALSKY. There is nothing here
For us to weigh ; all has been fully weighed.
The proofs demonstrate incontestably.
This is not Moscow, sirs ! No despot here
Keeps our free souls in manacles. Here truth
May walk by day or night with brow erect.
I will not think, my lords, in Cracow here,
Here in the very Diet of the Poles,
That Moscow's Czar should have obsequious slaves.

DEMETRIUS.
Oh, take my thanks, ye reverend senators !
That ye have lent your credence to these proofs ;
And if I be indeed the man whom I
Protest myself, oh, then, endure not this
Audacious robber should usurp my seat,
Or longer desecrate that sceptre which
To me, as the true Czarowitsch, belongs.
Yes, justice lies with me, — you have the power.
'Tis the most dear concern of every state
And throne, that right should everywhere prevail,
And all men in the world possess their own.
For there, where justice holds uncumbered sway,
There each enjoys his heritage secure,
And over every house and every throne
Law, truth, and order keep their angel watch.
It is the key-stone of the world's wide arch,
The one sustaining and sustained by all,
Which, if it fail, brings all in ruin down.
(*Answers of* SENATORS *giving assent to* DEMETRIUS.)

DEMETRIUS.
Oh, look on me, renowned Sigismund !
Great king, on thine own bosom turn thine eyes.
And in my destiny behold thine own.
Thou, too, hast known the rude assaults of fate ;
Within a prison camest thou to the world ;
Thy earliest glances fell on dungeon walls.
Thou, too, hadst need of friends to set thee free,
And raise thee from a prison to a throne.
These didst thou find. That noble kindness thou

Didst reap from them, oh, testify to me.
And you, ye grave and honored councillors,
Most reverend bishops, pillars of the church,
Ye palatines and castellans of fame,
The moment has arrived, by one high deed,
To reconcile two nations long estranged.
Yours be the glorious boast, that Poland's power
Hath given the Muscovites their Czar, and in
The neighbor who oppressed you as a foe
Secure an ever-grateful friend. And you,
The deputies of the august republic,
Saddle your steeds of fire! Leap to your seats!
To you expand high fortune's golden gates;
I will divide the foeman's spoil with you.
Moscow is rich in plunder; measureless
In gold and gems, the treasures of the Czar;
I can give royal guerdons to my friends,
And I will give them, too. When I, as Czar,
Set foot within the Kremlin, then, I swear,
The poorest of you all, that follows me,
Shall robe himself in velvet and in sables;
With costly pearls his housings shall he deck,
And silver be the metal of least worth,
That he shall shoe his horses' hoofs withal.

[*Great commotion among the* DEPUTIES. KORELA, *Hetman of the Cossacks, declares himself ready to put himself at the head of an army.*

ODOWALSKY.

How! shall we leave the Cossack to despoil us
At once of glory and of booty both?
We've made a truce with Tartar and with Turk,
And from the Swedish power have naught to fear.
Our martial spirit has been wasting long
In slothful peace; our swords are red with rust.
Up! and invade the kingdom of the Czar,
And win a grateful and true-hearted friend,
Whilst we augment our country's might and glory.

MANY DEPUTIES.

War! War with Moscow!

OTHERS. Be it so resolved!

On to the votes at once!

SAPIEHA (*rises*). Grand marshal, please
To order silence! I desire to speak.
A CROWD OF VOICES.
War! War with Moscow!
SAPIEHA. Nay, I will be heard.
Ho, marshal, do your duty!
[*Great tumult within and outside the hall.*
GRAND MARSHAL. 'Tis, you see,
Quite fruitless.
SAPIEHA. What? The marshal's self suborned?
Is this our Diet, then, no longer free?
Throw down your staff, and bid this brawling cease;
I charge you, on your office, to obey!
[*The* GRAND MARSHAL *casts his baton into the centre of the hall; the tumult abates.*
What whirling thoughts, what mad resolves are these?
Stand we not now at peace with Moscow's Czar?
Myself, as your imperial envoy, made
A treaty to endure for twenty years;
I raised this right hand, that you see, aloft
In solemn pledge, within the Kremlin's walls;
And fairly hath the Czar maintained his word.
What is sworn faith? what compacts, treaties, when
A solemn Diet tramples on them all?
DEMETRIUS.
Prince Leo Sapieha! You concluded
A bond of peace, you say, with Moscow's Czar?
That did you not; for I, I am that Czar.
In me is Moscow's majesty; I am
The son of Ivan, and his rightful heir.
Would the Poles treat with Russia for a peace,
Then must they treat with me! Your compact's null,
As being made with one whose's title's null.
ODOWALSKY.
What reck we of your treaty? So we willed
When it was made — our wills are changed to-day.
SAPIEHA.
Is it, then, come to this? If none beside
Will stand for justice, then, at least, will I.
I'll rend the woof of cunning into shreds,

And lay its falsehoods open to the day.
Most reverend primate! art thou, canst thou be
So simple-souled, or canst thou so dissemble?
Are ye so credulous, my lords? My liege,
Art thou so weak? Ye know not — will not know,
Ye are the puppets of the wily Waywode
Of Sendomir, who reared this spurious Czar,
Whose measureless ambition, while we speak,
Clutches in thought the spoils of Moscow's wealth.
Is't left for me to tell you that even now
The league is made and sworn betwixt the twain,—
The pledge the Waywode's youngest daughter's hand?
And shall our great republic blindly rush
Into the perils of an unjust war,
To aggrandize the Waywode, and to crown
His daughter as the empress of the Czar?
There's not a man he has not bribed and bought.
He means to rule the Diet, well I know;
I see his faction rampant in this hall,
And, as 'twere not enough that he controlled
The Seym Walmy by a majority,
He's girt the Diet with three thousand horse,
And all Cracow is swarming like a hive
With his sworn feudal vassals. Even now
They throng the halls and chambers where we sit,
To hold our liberty of speech in awe.
Yet stirs no fear in my undaunted heart;
And while the blood keeps current in my veins,
I will maintain the freedom of my voice!
Let those who think like men come stand by me!
Whilst I have life shall no resolve be passed
That is at war with justice and with reason.
'Twas I that ratified the peace with Moscow,
And I will hazard life to see it kept.

ODOWALSKY.

Give him no further hearing! Take the votes!

[*The* BISHOP OF CRACOW *and* WILNA *rise, and descend each to his own side, to collect the votes.*

MANY.

War, war with Moscow!

ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN (*to* SAPIEHA).

Noble sir, give way!
You see the mass are hostile to your views;
Then do not force a profitless division!

IMPERIAL HIGH CHANCELLOR (*descends from the throne to* SAPIEHA).

The king entreats you will not press the point,
Sir Waywode, to division in the Diet.

DOORKEEPER (*aside to* ODOWALSKY).

Keep a bold front, and fearless — summon those
That wait without. All Cracow stands by you.

IMPERIAL GRAND MARSHAL (*to* SAPIEHA).

Such excellent decrees have passed before;
Oh, cease, and for their sake, so fraught with good,
Unite your voice with the majority!

BISHOP OF CRACOW (*has collected the votes on his side*).

On this right bench are all unanimous.

SAPIEHA.

And let them to a man! Yet I say no!
I urge my veto — I break up the Diet.
Stay further progress! Null and void are all
The resolutions passed ——

[*General commotion; the* KING *descends from the throne, the barriers are broken down, and there arises a tumultuous uproar.* DEPUTIES *draw their swords, and threaten* SAPIEHA *with them. The* BISHOPS *interpose, and protect him with their stoles.*

Majority?
What is it? The majority is madness;
Reason has still ranked only with the few.
What cares he for the general weal that's poor?
Has the lean beggar choice, or liberty?
To the great lords of earth, that hold the purse,
He must for bread and raiment sell his voice.
'Twere meet that voices should be weighed, not counted.
Sooner or later must the state be wrecked,
Where numbers sway and ignorance decides.

ODOWALSKY.

Hark to the traitor! ——

DEPUTIES. Hew him into shreds!
Down with him!
ARCHBISHOP OF GNESEN (*snatches the crucifix out of his chaplain's hand and interposes.*
Peace, peace!
Shall native blood be in the Diet shed?
Prince Sapieha! be advised!
[*To the* BISHOPS.
Bring him away,
And interpose your bosoms as his shield!
Through this side door remove him quietly,
Or the wild mob will tear him limb from limb!
[SAPIEHA, *still casting looks of defiance, is forced away by the* BISHOPS, *whilst the* ARCHBISHOPS OF GNESEN *and* LEMBERG *keep the* DEPUTIES *at bay. Amidst violent tumult and clashing of arms, the hall is emptied of all but* DEMETRIUS, MEISCHEK, ODOWALSKY, *and the Hetman of the Cossacks.*
ODOWALSKY.
That point miscarried,—
Yet shall you not lack aid because of this:
If the republic holds the peace with Moscow,
At our own charges we shall push your claims.
KORELA.
Who ever could have dreamed, that he alone
Would hold his ground against the assembled Diet?
MEISCHEK.
The king! the king!
[*Enter* KING SIGISMUND, *attended by the* LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR, *the* GRAND MARSHAL, *and several* BISHOPS.
KING. Let me embrace you, prince!
At length the high republic does you justice;
My heart has done so long, and many a day.
Your fate doth move me deeply, as, indeed,
What monarch's heart but must be moved by it?
DEMETRIUS.
The past, with all its sorrows, is forgot;
Here on your breast I feel new life begin.
KING.
I love not many words; yet what a king

May offer, who has vassels richer far
Than his poor self, that do I offer you.
You have been witness of an untoward scene,
But deem not ill of Poland's realm because
A tempest jars the vessel of the state.

MEISCHEK.

When winds are wild the steersman backs his helm
And makes for port with all the speed he may.

KING.

The Diet is dissolved. Although I wished,
I could not break the treaty with the Czar.
But you have powerful friends; and if the Pole,
At his own risk, take arms on your behalf,
Or if the Cossack choose to venture war,
They are free men, I cannot say them nay.

MEISCHEK.

The whole Rocoss is under arms already.
Please it but you, my liege, the angry stream
That raved against your sovereignty may turn
Its wrath on Moscow, leaving you unscathed.

KING.

The best of weapons Russia's self will give thee;
Thy surest buckler is the people's heart.
By Russia only Russia will be vanished.
Even as the Diet heard thee speak to-day,
Speak thou at Moscow to thy subjects, prince.
So chain their hearts, and thou wilt be their king
In Sweden I by right of birth ascended
The throne of my inheritance in peace;
Yet did I lose the kingdom of my sires
Because my people's hearts were not with me.

Enter MARINA.

MEISCHEK.

My gracious liege, here, kneeling at your feet,
Behold Marina, youngest of my daughters;
The prince of Moscow offers her his heart.
Thou art the stay and pillar of our house,
And only from thy royal hand 'tis meet
That she receive her spouse and sovereign.

[MARINA *kneels to the* KING

KING.

Well, if you wish it, cousin, gladly I
Will do the father's office to the Czar.
[*To* DEMETRIUS, *giving him* MARINA's *hand.*
Thus do I bring you, in this lovely pledge,
High fortune's blooming goddess; and may these
Old eyes be spared to see this gracious pair
Sit in imperial state on Moscow's throne.

MARINA.

My liege, I humbly thank your grace, and shall
Esteem me still your slave where'er I be.

KING.

Rise up, Czaritza! This is not a place
For you, the plighted bridemaid of the Czar;
For you, the daughter of my foremost Waywode.
You are the youngest of your sisters; yet
Your spirit wings a high and glorious course,
And nobly grasps the top of sovereignty.

DEMETRIUS.

Be thou, great monarch, witness of my oath,
As, prince to prince, I pledge it here to you!
This noble lady's hand I do accept
As fortune's dearest pledge, and swear that, soon
As on my father's throne I take my seat,
I'll lead her home in triumph as my bride,
With all the state that fits a mighty queen.
And, for a dowry, to my bride I give
The principalities Pleskow and Great Neugart,
With all towns, hamlets, and in-dwellers there,
With all the rights and powers of sovereignty,
In absolute possession evermore;
And this, my gift, will I as Czar confirm
In my free city, Moscow. Furthermore,
As compensation to her noble sire
For present charges, I engage to pay
A million ducats, Polish currency.
So help me God, and all his saints, as I
Have truly sworn this oath, and shall fulfil it.

KING.

You will do so; you never will forget
For what you are the noble Waywode's debtor;

Who, for your wishes, perils his sure wealth,
And, for your hopes, a child his heart adores,
A friend so rare is to be rarely prized!
Then when your hopes are crowned forget not ever
The steps by which you mounted to the throne,
Nor with your garments let your heart be changed!
Think, that in Poland first you knew yourself, —
That this land gave you birth a second time.

DEMETRIUS.

I have been nurtured in adversity;
And learned to reverence the beauteous bond
Which links mankind with sympathies of love.

KING.

But now you enter on a realm where all —
Use, custom, morals — are untried and strange
In Poland here reigns freedom absolute;
The king himself, although in pomp supreme,
Must ofttime be the serf of his noblesse;
But there the father's sacred power prevails,
And in the subject finds a passive slave.

DEMETRIUS.

That glorious freedom which surrounds me here
I will transplant into my native land,
And turn these bond-serfs into glad-souled men;
Not o'er the souls of slaves will I bear rule.

KING.

Do naught in haste; but by the time be led!
Prince, ere we part, three lessons take from me,
And truly follow them when thou art king.
It is a king that gives them, old and tried,
And they may prove of profit to thy youth.

DEMETRIUS.

Oh, share thy wisdom with me! Thou hast won
The reverence of a free and mighty people;
What must I do to earn so fair a prize?

KING. You come from a strange land,
Borne on the weapons of a foreign foe;
This first felt wrong thou hast to wash away.
Then bear thee like a genuine son of Moscow,
With reverence due to all her usages.
Keep promise with the Poles, and value them,

For thou hast need of friends on thy new throne:
The arm that placed thee there can hurl thee down.
Esteem them honorably, yet ape them not;
Strange customs thrive not in a foreign soil.
And, whatsoe'er thou dost, revere thy mother—
You'll find a mother ——

DEMETRIUS. Oh, my liege!

KING. High claim
Hath she upon thy filial reverence.
Do her all honor. 'Twixt thy subjects and
Thyself she stands, a sacred, precious link.
No human law o'errides the imperial power;
Nothing but nature may command its awe;
Nor can thy people own a surer pledge,
That thou art gentle, than thy filial love.
I say no more. Much yet is to be done,
Ere thou mak'st booty of the golden fleece.
Expect no easy victory!
Czar Boris rules with strong and skilful hand;
You take the field against no common man.
He that by merit hath achieved the throne,
Is not puffed from his seat by popular breath;
His deeds do serve to him for ancestors.
To your good fortune I commend you now;
Already twice, as by a miracle,
Hath it redeemed you from the grasp of death;
'Twill put the finish on its work, and crown you.

[*Exeunt omnes but* MARINA *and* ODOWALSKY.

ODOWALSKY.

Say, lady, how have I fulfilled my charge?
Truly and well, and wilt thou laud my zeal?

MARINA.

'Tis, Odowalsky, well we are alone;
Matters of weight have we to canvass which
'Tis meet the prince know nothing of. May he
Pursue the voice divine that goads him on!
If in himself he have belief, the world
Will catch the flame, and give him credence too.
He must be kept in that vague, shadowing mist,
Which is a fruitful mother of great deeds,
While we see clear, and act in certainty.

He lends the name — the inspiration; we
Must bear the brain, the shaping thought, for him;
And when, by art and craft, we have insured
The needful levies, let him still dream on,
And think they dropped, to aid him, from the clouds.

ODOWALSKY.

Give thy commands: I live but for thy service.
Think'st thou this Moscovite or his affairs
Concern my thoughts? 'Tis thou, thou and thy glory
For which I will adventure life and all.
For me no fortune blossoms; friendless, landless,
I dare not let my hopes aspire to thee.
Thy grace I may not win, but I'll deserve it.
To make thee great be my one only aim;
Then, though another should possess thee, still
Thou wilt be mine — being what I have made thee.

MARINA.

Therefore my whole heart do I pledge to thee;
To thee I trust the acting of my thoughts.
The king doth mean us false. I read him through.
'Twas a concerted farce with Sapieha,
A juggle, all! 'Twould please him well, belike,
To see my father's power, which he dreads deeply,
Enfeebled in this enterprise — the league
Of the noblesse, which shook his heart with fear,
Drawn off in this campaign on foreign bounds,
While he himself sits neutral in the fray.
He thinks to share our fortune, if we win;
And if we lose, he hopes with greater ease
To fix on us the bondage of his yoke.
We stand alone. This die is cast. If he
Cares for himself, we shall be selfish too.
You lead the troops to Kioff. There let them swear
Allegiance to the prince, and unto me; —
Mark you, to me! 'Tis needful for our ends.
I want your eye, and not your arm alone.

ODOWALSKY.

Command me — speak —

MARINA. You lead the Czarowitsch.

Keep your eye on him; stir not from his side,
Render me 'count of every step he makes.

ODOWALSKY.
Rely on me, he'll never cast us off.
MARINA.
No man is grateful. Once his throne is sure,
He'll not be slow to cast our bonds aside.
The Russian hates the Pole — must hate him ever;
No bond of amity can link their hearts.

Enter OPALINSKY, BIELSKY, *and several Polish noblemen.*

OPALINSKY.
Fair patron, get us gold, and we march with you,
This lengthened Diet has consumed our all.
Let us have gold, we'll make thee Russia's queen.
MARINA.
The Bishop of Kaminieck and Culm
Lends money on the pawn of land and serfs.
Sell, barter, pledge the hamlets of your boors,
Turn all to silver, horses, means of war!
War is the best of chapmen. He transmutes
Iron into gold. Whate'er you now may lose
You'll find in Moscow twenty-fold again.
BIELSKY.
Two hundred more wait in the tavern yonder;
If you will show yourself, and drain a cup
With them, they're yours, all yours — I know them well.
MARINA.
Expect me! You shall introduce me to them.
OPALINSKY.
'Tis plain that you were born to be a queen.
MARINA.
I was, and therefore I must be a queen.
BIELSKY.
Ay, mount the snow-white steed, thine armor on,
And so, a second Vanda, lead thy troops,
Inspired by thee, to certain victory.
MARINA. My spirit leads you. War is not for women.
The rendezvous is in Kioff. Thither my father
Will lead a levy of three thousand horse.
My sister's husband gives two thousand more,

And the Don sends a Cossack host in aid.
Do you all swear you will be true to me?

ALL. All, all — we swear! (*draw their swords*)
Vivat Marina, Russiæ Regina!

[MARINA *tears her veil in pieces, and divides it among them.* *Exeunt omnes but* MARINA.

Enter MEISCHEK.

MARINA.
Wherefore so sad, when fortune smiles on us,
When every step thrives to our utmost wish,
And all around are arming in our cause?

MEISCHEK.
'Tis even because of this, my child! All, all
Is staked upon the cast. Thy father's means
Are in these warlike preparations swamped.
I have much cause to ponder seriously;
Fortune is false, uncertain the result.
Mad, venturous girl, what hast thou brought me to?
What a weak father have I been, that I
Did not withstand thy importunities!
I am the richest Waywode of the empire,
The next in honor to the king. Had we
But been content to be so, and enjoyed
Our stately fortunes with a tranquil soul!
Thy hopes soared higher — not for thee sufficed
The moderate station which thy sisters won.
Thou wouldst attain the loftiest mark that can
By mortals be achieved, and wear a crown.
I, thy fond, foolish father, longed to heap
On thee, my darling one, all glorious gains,
So by thy prayers I let myself be fooled,
And peril my sure fortunes on a chance.

MARINA.
How? My dear father, dost thou rue thy goodness?
Who with the meaner prize can live content,
When o'er his head the noblest courts his grasp?

MEISCHEK.
Thy sisters wear no crowns, yet they are happy.

MARINA.
What happiness is that to leave the home

Of the Waywode, my father, for the house
Of some count palatine, a grateful bride?
What do I gain of new from such a change?
And can I joy in looking to the morrow
When it brings naught but what was stale to-day?
Oh, tasteless round of petty, worn pursuits!
Oh, wearisome monotony of life!
Are they a guerdon for high hopes, high aims?
Or love or greatness I must have: all else
Are unto me alike indifferent.
Smooth off the trouble from thy brow, dear father!
Let's trust the stream that bears us on its breast,
Think not upon the sacrifice thou makest,
Think on the prize, the goal that's to be won —
When thou shalt see thy daughter robed in state,
In regal state, aloft on Moscow's throne,
And thy son's sons the rulers of the world!

MEISCHEK.

I think of naught, see naught, but thee, my child,
Girt with the splendors of the imperial crown.
Thou'rt bent to have it; I cannot gainsay thee.

MARINA.

Yet one request, my dearest, best of fathers,
I pray you grant me!

MEISCHEK. Name thy wish, my child.

MARINA.

Shall I remain shut up at Sambor with
The fires of boundless longing in my breast?
Beyond the Dnieper will my die be cast,
While boundless space divides me from the spot;
Can I endure it? Oh, the impatient spirit
Will lie upon the rack of expectation
And measure out this monstrous length of space
With groans and anxious throbbings of the heart.

MEISCHEK.

What dost thou wish? What is it thou wouldst have?

MARINA.

Let me abide the issue in Kioff!
There I can gather tidings at their source.
There on the frontier of both kingdoms ——

MEISCHEK.

Thy spirit's over-bold. Restrain it, child!

MARINA.

Yes, thou dost yield, — thou'lt take me with thee, then?

MEISCHEK.

Thou rulest me. Must I not do thy will?

MARINA.

My own dear father, when I am Moscow's queen
Kioff, you know, must be our boundary.
Kioff must then be mine, and thou shalt rule it.

MEISCHEK.

Thou dreamest, girl! Already the great Moscow
Is for thy soul too narrow; thou, to grasp
Domains, wilt strip them from thy native land.

MARINA.

Kioff belonged not to our native land;
There the Varegers ruled in days of yore.
I have the ancient chronicles by heart;
'Twas from the Russian empire wrenched by force.
I will restore it to its former crown.

MEISCHEK.

Hush, hush! The Waywode must not hear such talk. [*Trumpet without.*
They're breaking up.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Greek convent in a bleak district near the sea Belozero. A train of nuns, in black robes and veils, passes over the back of the stage. MARFA, *in a white veil, stands apart from the others, leaning on a tombstone.* OLGA *steps out from the train, remains gazing at her for a time, and then advances to her.*

OLGA.

And does thy heart not urge thee forth with us
To taste reviving nature's opening sweets?
The glad sun comes, the long, long night retires,
The ice melts in the streams, and soon the sledge
Will to the boat give place and summer swallow.

The world awakes once more, and the new joy
Woos all to leave their narrow cloister cells
For the bright air and freshening breath of spring.
And wilt thou only, sunk in lasting grief,
Refuse to share the general exultation?

MARFA.

On with the rest, and leave me to myself!
Let those rejoice who still have power to hope.
The time that puts fresh youth in all the world
Brings naught to me; to me the past is all,
My hopes, my joys are with the things that were.

OLGA.

Dost thou still mourn thy son — still, still lament
The sovereignty which thou has lost? Does time,
Which pours a balm on every wounded heart,
Lose all its potency with thee alone?
Thou wert the empress of this mighty realm,
The mother of a blooming son. He was
Snatched from thee by a dreadful destiny;
Into this dreary convent wert thou thrust,
Here on the verge of habitable earth.
Full sixteen times since that disastrous day
The face of nature hath renewed its youth;
Still have I seen no change come over thine,
That looked a grave amid a blooming world.
Thou'rt like some moonless image, carved in stone
By sculptor's chisel, that doth ever keep
The selfsame fixed unalterable mien.

MARFA.

Yes, time, fell time, hath signed and set me up
As a memorial of my dreadful fate.
I will not be at peace, will not forget.
That soul must be of poor and shallow stamp
Which takes a cure from time — a recompense
For what can never be compensated!
Nothing shall buy my sorrow from me. No,
As heaven's vault still goes with the wanderer,
Girds and environs him with boundless grasp,
Turn where he will, by sea or land, so goes
My anguish with me, wheresoe'er I turn;
It hems me round, like an unbounded sea;
My ceaseless tears have failed to drain its depths.

OLGA. Oh, see! what news can yonder boy have brought,
The sisters round him throng so eagerly?
He comes from distant shores, where homes abound,
And brings us tidings from the land of men.
The sea is clear, the highways free once more.
Art thou not curious to learn his news?
Though to the world we are as good as dead,
Yet of its changes willingly we hear,
And, safe upon the shore, with wonder mark
The roar and ferment of the trampling waves.

[NUNS *come down the stage with a* FISHER BOY.

XENIA — HELENA.
Speak, speak, and tell us all the news you bring.

ALEXIA.
Relate what's passing in the world beyond.

FISHER BOY.
Good, pious ladies, give me time to speak!

XENIA.
Is't war — or peace?

ALEXIA. Who's now upon the throne?

FISHER BOY.
A ship is to Archangel just come in
From the north pole, where everything is ice.

OLGA.
How came a vessel into that wild sea?

FISHER BOY.
It is an English merchantman, and it
Has found a new way out to get to us.

ALEXIA.
What will not man adventure for his gain?

XENIA.
And so the world is nowhere to be barred!

FISHER BOY.
But that's the very smallest of the news.
'Tis something very different moves the world.

ALEXIA.
Oh, speak and tell us!

OLGA. Say, what has occurred?

FISHER BOY.
We live to hear strange marvels nowadays:
The dead rise up, and come to life again.

OLGA.
Explain yourself.
FISHER BOY. Prince Dmitri, Ivan's son,
Whom we have mourned for dead these sixteen years,
Is now alive, and has appeared in Poland.
OLGA.
The prince alive?
MARFA (*starting*). My son!
OLGA. Compose thyself!
Calm down thy heart till we have learned the whole.
ALEXIA.
How can this possibly be so, when he
Was killed, and perished in the flames at Uglitsch?
FISHER BOY.
He managed somehow to escape the fire,
And found protection in a monastery.
There he grew up in secrecy, until
His time was come to publish who he was.
OLGA (*to* MARFA).
You tremble, princess! You grow pale!
MARFA. I know
That it must be delusion, yet so little
Is my heart steeled 'gainst fear and hope e'en now,
That in my breast it flutters like a bird.
OLGA.
Why should it be delusion? Mark his words!
How could this rumor spread without good cause?
FISHER BOY.
Without good cause? The Lithuanians
And Poles are all in arms upon his side.
The Czar himself quakes in his capital.
[MARFA *is compelled by her emotion to lean upon* OLGA *and* ALEXIA.
XENIA.
Speak on, speak, tell us everything you know.
ALEXIA.
And tell us, too, of whom you stole the news
FISHER BOY.
I stole the news? A letter has gone forth
To every town and province from the Czar.
This letter the Posadmik of our town

Read to us all, in open market-place.
It bore, that busy schemers were abroad,
And that we should not lend their tales belief.
But this made us believe them; for, had they
Been false, the Czar would have despised the lie.

MARFA.

Is this the calm I thought I had achieved?
And clings my heart so close to temporal things,
That a mere word can shake my inward soul?
For sixteen years have I bewailed my son,
And yet at once believe that still he lives.

OLGA.

Sixteen long years thou'st mourned for him as dead
And yet his ashes thou hast never seen!
Naught countervails the truth of the report.
Nay, does not Providence watch o'er the fate
Of kings and monarchies? Then welcome hope!
More things befall than thou canst comprehend.
Who can set limits to the Almighty's power?

MARFA.

Shall I turn back to look again on life,
To which long since I spoke a sad farewell?
It was not with the dead my hopes abode.
Oh, say no more of this. Let not my heart
Hang on this phantom hope! Let me not lose
My darling son a second time. Alas!
My peace of mind is gone, — my dream of peace
I cannot trust these tidings, — yet, alas,
I can no longer dash them from my soul!
Woe's me, I never lost my son till now.
Oh, now I can no longer tell if I
Shall seek him 'mongst the living or the dead,
Tossed on the rock of never-ending doubt.

[*A bell sounds, — the sister* PORTERESS *enters.*

OLGA.

Why has the bell been sounded, sister, say?

PORTERESS.

The lord archbishop waits without; he brings
A message from the Czar, and craves an audience.

OLGA. Does the archbishop stand within our gates?
What strange occurrence can have brought him here?

XENIA.

Come all, and give him greeting as befits.

[*They advance towards the gate as the* ARCHBISHOP *enters; they all kneel before him, and he makes the sign of the Greek cross over them.*

IOB. The kiss of peace I bring you in the name
Of Father, Son, and of the Holy Ghost,
Proceeding from the Father!

OLGA. Sir, we kiss
In humblest reverence thy paternal hand!
Command thy daughters!

IOB. My mission is addressed to Sister Marfa.

OLGA.

See, here she stands, and waits to know thy will.

[*All the* NUNS *withdraw.*

IOB. It is the mighty prince who sends me here;
Upon his distant throne he thinks of thee;
For as the sun, with his great eye of flame,
Sheds light and plenty all abroad the world,
So sweeps the sovereign's eye on every side;
Even to the farthest limits of his realm
His care is wakeful and his glance is keen.

MARFA.

How far his arm can strike I know too well.

IOB. He knows the lofty spirit fills thy soul,
And therefore feels indignantly the wrong
A bold-faced villain dares to offer thee.
Learn, then, in Poland, an audacious churl,
A renegade, who broke his monkish vows,
Laid down his habit, and renounced his God,
Doth use the name and title of thy son,
Whom death snatched from thee in his infancy.
The shameless varlet boasts him of thy blood,
And doth affect to be Czar Ivan's son;
A Waywode breaks the peace; from Poland leads
This spurious monarch, whom himself created,
Across our frontiers, with an armed power:
So he beguiles the Russians' faithful hearts,
And lures them on to treason and revolt.
The Czar,
With pure, paternal feeling, sends me to thee.

Thou hold'st the manes of thy son in honor;
Nor wilt permit a bold adventurer
To steal his name and title from the tomb,
And with audacious hand usurp his rights.
Thou wilt proclaim aloud to all the world
That thou dost own him for no son of thine.
Thou wilt not nurse a bastard's alien blood
Upon thy heart, that beats so nobly; never!
Thou wilt — and this the Czar expects from thee —
Give the vile counterfeit the lie, with all
The righteous indignation it deserves.

MARFA (*who has during the last speech subdued the most violent emotion*).

What do I hear, archbishop? Can it be?
Oh, tell me, by what signs and marks of proof
This bold-faced trickster doth uphold himself
As Ivan's son, whom we bewailed as dead?

IOB. By some faint, shadowy likeness to the Czar,
By documents which chance threw in his way,
And by a precious trinket, which he shows,
He cheats the credulous and wondering mob.

MARFA.

What is the trinket? Oh, pray, tell me what?

IOB. A golden cross, gemmed with nine emeralds,
Which Ivan Westislowsky, so he says,
Hung round his neck at the baptismal font.

MARFA.

What do you say? He shows this trinket, this?
[*With forced composure.*
And how does he allege he came by it?

IOB. A faithful servant and Diak, he says,
Preserved him from the assassins and the flames,
And bore him to Smolenskow privily.

MARFA.

But where was he brought up? Where, gives he forth,
Was he concealed and fostered until now?

IOB. In Tschudow's monastery he was reared,
Unknowing who he was; from thence he fled
To Lithuania and Poland, where
He served the Prince of Sendomir, until
An accident revealed his origin.

MARFA.
With such a tale as this can he find friends
To peril life and fortune in his cause?
IOB. Oh, madam, false, false-hearted is the Pole,
And enviously he eyes our country's wealth.
He welcomes every pretext that may serve
To light the flames of war within our bounds!
MARFA.
And were there credulous spirits, even in Moscow,
Could by this juggle be so lightly stirred?
IOB. Oh, fickle, princess, is the people's heart!
They dote on alteration, and expect
To reap advantage from a change of rulers.
The bold assurance of the falsehood charms;
The marvellous finds favor and belief.
Therefore the Czar is anxious thou shouldst quell
This mad delusion, as thou only canst.
A word from thee annihilates the traitor
That falsely claims the title of thy son.
It joys me thus to see thee moved. I see
The audacious juggle rouses all thy pride,
And, with a noble anger paints thy cheek.
MARFA.
And where, where, tell me, does he tarry now,
Who dares usurp the title of my son?
IOB. E'en now he's moving on to Tscherinsko;
His camp at Kioff has broke up, 'tis rumored;
And with a force of mounted Polish troops
And Don Cossacks, he comes to push his claims.
MARFA.
Oh, God Almighty, thanks, thanks, thanks, that thou
Hast sent me rescue and revenge at last!
IOB. How, Marfa, how am I to construe this?
MARFA.
Oh, heavenly powers, conduct him safely here!
Hover, oh all ye angels, round his banners!
IOB. Can it be so? The traitor, canst thou trust ——
MARFA.
He is my son. Yes! by these signs alone
I recognize him. By thy Czar's alarm
I recognize him. Yes! He lives! He comes!

Down, tyrant, from thy throne, and shake with fear!
There still doth live a shoot from Rurik's stem;
The genuine Czar — the rightful heir draws nigh,
He comes to claim a reckoning for his own.

IOB. Dost thou bethink thee what thou say'st? 'Tis madness!

MARFA.

At length — at length has dawned the day of vengeance, —
Of restoration. Innocence is dragged
To light by heaven from the grave's midnight gloom.
The haughty Godunow, my deadly foe,
Must crouch and sue for mercy at my feet;
Oh, now my burning wishes are fulfilled!

IOB. Can hate and rancorous malice blind you so?

MARFA. Can terror blind your monarch so, that he
Should hope deliverance from me — from me —
Whom he hath done immeasurable wrong?
I shall, forsooth, deny the son whom heaven
Restores me by a miracle from the grave,
And to please him, the butcher of my house,
Who piled upon me woes unspeakable?
Yes, thrust from me the succor God has sent
In the sad evening of my heavy anguish?
No, thou escap'st me not. No, thou shalt hear me
I have thee fast, I will not let thee free.
Oh, I can ease my bosom's load at last!
At last launch forth against mine enemy
The long-pent anger of my inmost soul!
Who was it, who,
That shut me up within this living tomb,
In all the strength and freshness of my youth,
With all its feelings glowing in my breast?
Who from my bosom rent my darling son,
And chartered ruffian hands to take his life?
Oh, words can never tell what I have suffered,
When, with a yearning that would not be still,
I watched throughout the long, long starry nights,
And noted with my tears the hours elapse!
The day of succor comes, and of revenge;
I see the mighty glorying in his might,

IOB. You think the Czar will dread you—you mistake.
MARFA.
He's in my power—one little word from me,
One only, sets the seal upon his fate!
It was for this thy master sent thee here!
The eyes of Russia and of Poland now
Are closely bent upon me. If I own
The Czarowitsch as Ivan's son and mine,
Then all will do him homage; his the throne.
If I disown him, then he is undone;
For who will credit that his rightful mother,
A mother wronged, so foully wronged as I,
Could from her heart repulse its darling child,
To league with the despoilers of her house?
I need but speak one word and all the world
Deserts him as a traitor. Is't not so?
This word you wish from me. That mighty service.
Confess, I can perform for Godunow!
IOB. Thou wouldst perform it for thy country, and
Avert the dread calamities of war,
Shouldst thou do homage to the truth. Thyself,
Ay, thou hast ne'er a doubt thy son is dead;
And couldst thou testify against thy conscience?
MARFA.
These sixteen years I've mourned his death; but yet
I ne'er have seen his ashes. I believed
His death, there trusting to the general voice
And my sad heart — I now believe he lives,
Trusting the general voice and my strong hope.
'Twere impious, with audacious doubts, to seek
To set a bound to the Almighty's will;
And even were he not my heart's dear son,
Yet should he be the son of my revenge.
In my child's room I take him to my breast,
Whom heaven has sent me to avenge my wrongs.
IOB. Unhappy one, dost thou defy the strong?
From his far-reaching arm thou art not safe
Even in the convent's distant solitude.
MARFA.
Kill me he may, and stifle in the grave,
Or dungeon's gloom, my woman's voice, that it

Shall not reverberate throughout the world.
This he may do; but force me to speak aught
Against my will, that can he not; though backed
By all thy craft — no, he has missed his aim!

IOB. Is this thy final purpose. Ponder well!
Hast thou no gentler message for the Czar?

MARFA.
Tell him to hope for heaven, if so he dare,
And for his people's love, if so he can.

IOB. Enough! thou art bent on thy destruction.
Thou lean'st upon a reed, will break beneath thee;
One common ruin will o'erwhelm ye both. [*Exit*

MARFA.
It is my son, I cannot doubt 'tis he.
Even the wild hordes of the uncultured wastes
Take arms upon his side; the haughty Pole,
The palatine, doth stake his noble daughter
On the pure gold of his most righteous cause,
And I alone reject him — I, his mother?
I, only I, shook not beneath the storm
Of joy that lifts all hearts with dizzying whirl,
And scatters turmoil widely o'er the earth.
He is my son — I must, will trust in him,
And grasp with living confidence the hand
Which heaven hath sent for my deliverance.
'Tis he, he comes with his embattled hosts,
To set me free, and to avenge my shame!
Hark to his drums, his martial trumpets' clang!
Ye nations come — come from the east and south.
Forth from your steppes, your immemorial woods!
Of every tongue, of every raiment come!
Bridle the steed, the reindeer, and the camel!
Sweep hither, countless as the ocean waves,
And throng around the banners of your king!
Oh, wherefore am I mewed and fettered here,
A prisoned soul with longings infinite!
Thou deathless sun, that circlest earth's huge ball,
Be thou the messenger of my desires!
Thou all-pervading, chainless breeze that sweep'st
With lightning speed to earth's remotest bound,
Oh, bear to him the yearnings of my heart.

My prayers are all I have to give; but these
I pour all glowing from my inmost soul,
And send them up to heaven on wings of flame,
Like armed hosts, I send them forth to hail him.

Scene II.

A height crowned with trees. A wide and smiling landscape occupies the background, which is traversed by a beautiful river, and enlivened by the budding green of spring. At various points the towers of several towns are visible. Drums and martial music without. Enter Odowalsky, *and other officers, and immediately afterwards* Demetrius.

Odowalsky.

Go, lead the army downward by the wood,
Whilst we look round us here upon the height.

[*Exeunt some of the officers.*

Enter Demetrius.

Demetrius (*starting back*).

Ha! what a prospect!

Odowalsky.

Sire, thou see'st thy kingdom
Spread out before thee. That is Russian land.

Razin.

Why, e'en this pillar here bears Moscow's arms;
Here terminates the empire of the Poles.

Demetrius.

Is that the Dnieper, rolls its quiet stream
Along these meadows?

Odowalsky.

That, sire, is the Desna;
See, yonder rise the towers of Tschernizow!

Razin.

Yon gleam you see upon the far horizon
Is from the roofs of Sewerisch Novogrod.

Demetrius.

What a rich prospect! What fair meadow lands!

Odowalsky.

The spring has decked them with her trim array;
A teeming harvest clothes the fruitful soil.

Demetrius.

The view is lost in limitless expanse.

RAZIN.

Yet is this but a small beginning, sire,
Of Russia's mighty empire. For it spreads
Towards the east to confines unexplored,
And on the north has ne'er a boundary,
Save the productive energy of earth.
Behold, our Czar is quite absorbed in thought.

DEMETRIUS.

On these fair meads dwell peace, unbroken peace,
And with war's terrible array I come
To scatter havoc, like a listed foe!

ODOWALSKY.

Hereafter 'twill be time to think of that.

DEMETRIUS.

Thou feelest as a Pole, I am Moscow's son.
It is the land to which I owe my life;
Forgive me, thou dear soil, land of my home,
Thou sacred boundary-pillar, which I clasp,
Whereon my sire his broad-spread eagle graved,
That I, thy son, with foreign foemen's arms,
Invade the tranquil temple of thy peace.
'Tis to reclaim my heritage I come,
And the proud name that has been stolen from me.
Here the Varegers, my forefathers, ruled,
In lengthened line, for thirty generations;
I am the last of all their lineage, snatched
From murder by God's special providence.

SCENE III.

A Russian village. An open square before a church. The tocsin is heard. GLEB, ILIA, *and* TIMOSKA *rush in, armed with hatchets.*

GLEB (*entering from a house*).

Why are they running?

ILIA (*entering from another house*).

Who has tolled the bell.

TIMOSKA.

Neighbors, come forth! Come all, to council come!

[*Enter* OLEG *and* IZOR, *with many other peasants, women and children, who carry bundles.*

GLEB.
Whence come ye hither with your wives and children?
IZOR. Fly, fly! The Pole has fallen upon the land
At Maromesk, and slaughters all he finds.
OLEG. Fly into the interior — to strong towns!
We've fired our cottages, there's not a soul
Left in the village, and we're making now
Up country for the army of the Czar.
TIMOSKA.
Here comes another troop of fugitives.
[IWANSKA *and* PETRUSCHKA, *with armed peasantry, enter on different sides.*
IWANSKA.
Long live the Czar! The mighty prince Dmitri!
GLEB. How! What is this!
ILIA. What do you mean?
TIMOSKA. Who are you?
PETRUSCHKA.
Join all who're loyal to our princely line!
TIMOSKA.
What means all this? There a whole village flies
Up country to escape the Poles, while you
Make for the very point whence these have fled,
To join the standard of the country's foe!
PETRUSCHKA.
What foe? It is no foe that comes; it is
The people's friend, the emperor's rightful heir.

The POSADMIK (the village judge) enters to read a manifesto by Demetrius. Vacillation of the inhabitants of the village between the two parties. The peasant women are the first to be won over to Demetrius, and turn the scale.

Camp of DEMETRIUS. He is worsted in the first action, but the army of the Czar Boris conquers in a manner against its will, and does not follow up its advantages. Demetrius, in despair, is about to destroy himself, and is

with difficulty prevented from doing so by Korela and Odowalsky. Overbearing demeanor of the Cossacks even to Demetrius.

Camp of the army of the Czar Boris. He is absent himself, and this injures his cause, as he is feared but not loved. His army is strong, but not to be relied on. The leaders are not unanimous, and partly incline to the side of Demetrius from a variety of motives. One of their number, Soltikow, declares for him from conviction. His adherence is attended with the most important results; a large portion of the army deserts to Demetrius.

Boris in Moscow. He still maintains his position as absolute ruler, and has faithful servants around him; but already he is discomposed by evil tidings. He is withheld from joining the army by apprehension of a rebellion in Moscow. He is also ashamed as Czar to enter the field in person against a traitor. Scene between him and the archbishop.

Bad news pours in from all sides, and Boris' danger grows momently more imminent. He hears of the revolt of the peasantry and the provincial towns, — of the inactivity and mutiny of the army, — of the commotions in Moscow, — of the advance of Demetrius. Romanow, whom he has deeply wronged, arrives in Moscow. This gives rise to new apprehensions. Now come the tidings that the Boiars are flying to the camp of Demetrius, and that the whole army has gone over to him.

Boris and Axinia. The Czar appears in a touching aspect as father, and in the dialogue with his daughter unfolds his inmost nature.

Boris has made his way to the throne by crime, but undertaken and fulfilled all the duties of a monarch; to the country he is a valuable prince and a true father

of his people. It is only in his personal dealings with individuals that he is cunning, revengeful, and cruel. His spirit as well as his rank elevates him above all that surround him. The long possession of supreme power, the habit of ruling over men, and the despotic form of government, have so nursed his pride that it is impossible for him to outlive his greatness. He sees clearly what awaits him; but still he is Czar, and not degraded, though he resolves to die.

He believes in forewarnings, and in his present mood things appear to him of significance which, on other occasions, he had despised. A particular circumstance, in which he seems to hear the voice of destiny, decides him.

Shortly before his death his nature changes; he grows milder, even towards the messengers of evil, and is ashamed of the bursts of rage with which he had received them before. He permits the worst to be told to him, and even rewards the narrator.

So soon as he learns the misfortune that seals his fate, he leaves the stage without further explanation, with composure and resignation. Shortly afterwards he returns in the habit of a monk, and removes his daughter from the sight of his last moments. She is to seek protection from insult in a cloister; his son, Feodor, as a child, will perhaps have less to fear. He takes poison, and enters a retired chamber to die in peace.

General confusion at the tidings of the Czar's death. The Boiars form an imperial council and rule in the Kremlin. Romanow (afterwards Czar, and founder of the now ruling house) enters at the head of an armed force, swears, on the bosom of the Czar, an oath of allegiance to his son Feodor, and compels the Boiars to follow his example. Revenge and ambition are far from his soul;

he pursues only justice. He loves Axinia without hope, and is, without knowing it, beloved by her in return.

Romanow hastens to the army to secure it for the young Czar. Insurrection in Moscow, brought about by the adherents of Demetrius. The people drag the Boiars from their houses, make themselves masters of Feodor and Axinia — put them in prison, and send delegates to Demetrius.

Demetrius in Tula, at the pinnacle of success. The army is his own; the keys of numerous towns are brought to him. Moscow alone appears to offer resistance. He is mild and amiable, testifies a noble emotion at the intelligence of the death of Boris, pardons a detected conspiracy against his life, despises the servile adulations of the Russians, and is for sending them away. The Poles, on the other hand, by whom he is surrounded, are rude and violent, and treat the Russians with contempt. Demetrius longs for a meeting with his mother, and sends a messenger to Marina.

Among the multitude of Russians who throng around Demetrius in Tula appears a man whom he at once recognizes; he is greatly delighted to see him. He bids all the rest withdraw, and so soon as he is alone with this man he thanks him, with full heart, as his preserver and benefactor. This person hints that Demetrius is under especial obligations to him, and to a greater extent than he is himself aware. Demetrius urges him to explain, and the assassin of the genuine Demetrius thereupon discloses the real facts of the case. For this murder he had received no recompense, but on the contrary had nothing but death to anticipate from Boris. Thirsting for revenge, he stumbled upon a boy, whose resemblance to the Czar Ivan struck him. This circumstance must be turned to account. He seized the boy, fled with him from Uglitsch, brought him to a monk, whom he succeeded in gaining over for his ends, and delivered to him

the trinkets which he had himself taken from the murdered Demetrius. By means of this boy, whom he had never lost sight of, and whose steps he had attended upon all occasions without being observed, he is now revenged. His tool, the false Demetrius, rules over Russia in Boris' room.

During this narration a mighty change comes over Demetrius. His silence is awful. In the moment of the highest rage and despair, the assassin drives him to the extreme of endurance, when with a defying and insolent air he demands his reward. Demetrius strikes him to the earth.

Soliloquy of Demetrius. Internal conflict; but the feeling of the necessity for maintaining his position as Czar is triumphant.

The delegates from Moscow arrive, and submit themselves to Demetrius. They are received gloomily, and with a menacing demeanor. Among them is the Patriarch. Demetrius deposes him from his dignity, and soon afterwards sentences to death a Russian of rank, who had questioned the authenticity of his birth.

Marfa and Olga await Demetrius under a magnificent tent. Marfa speaks of the approaching interview with more doubt and fear than hope, and trembles as the moment draws near which should assure her highest happiness. Olga speaks to her, herself without faith. During the long journey they have both had time to recall the whole circumstances; the first exultation had given place to reflection. The gloomy silence and the repulsive glances of the guards who surround the tent serve still further to augment their despondency.

The trumpets sound. Marfa is irresolute whether she shall advance to meet Demetrius. Now he stands before her alone. The little that was left of hope in her heart altogether vanishes on seeing him. An unknown some-

thing steps between them — Nature does not speak — they are separated forever. The first impulse is an endeavor to approach; Marfa is the first to make a movement to recede. Demetrius observes it, and remains for a moment paralyzed. Significant silence.

Demetrius. Does thy heart say nothing? Dost thou not recognize thy blood in me?

Marfa is silent.

Demetrius. The voice of nature is holy and free; I will neither constrain nor belie it. Had thy heart spoken at the first glance then had mine answered it; thou shouldst have found a pious, loving son in me. The claim of duty would have concurred with inclination and heartfelt affection. But if thou dost not feel as a mother for me, then, think as a princess, command thyself as a queen! Fate unexpectedly gave me to thee as a son; accept me as a gift of heaven. Though even I were not thy son, which I now appear to be, still I rob thy son of nothing. I stripped it from thy foe. Thee and thy blood have I avenged; I have delivered thee from the grave in which thou wert entombed alive, and led thee back into the royal seat. That thy destiny is linked with mine thou knowest. With me thou standest, and with me must fall. All the people's eyes are upon us. I hate deception, and what I do not feel I may not show; but I do really feel a reverence for thee, and this feeling, which bends my knee before thee, comes from my heart.

[*Dumb show of* Marfa, *to indicate her internal emotion.*

Demetrius. Make thy resolve! Let that which nature will not prompt be the free act of thy will! I ask no hypocrisy — no falsehood, from thee; I ask genuine feelings. Do not seem to be my mother, but be so. Throw the past from thee — grasp the present with thy whole heart! If I am not thy son yet I am the Czar — I have power and success upon my side. He who lies in his grave is dust; he has no heart to love thee, no eye to smile upon thee. Turn to the living. [Marfa *bursts into tears.*

Demetrius. Oh, these golden drops are welcome to me. Let them flow! Show thyself thus to the people!

[*At a signal from* Demetrius *the tent is thrown open, and the assembled Russians become spectators of this scene.*

Entrance of Demetrius into Moscow. Great splendor, but of a military kind. Poles and Cossacks compose the procession. Gloom and terror mingle with the demonstrations of joy. Distrust and misfortune surround the whole.

Romanow, who came to the army too late, has returned to Moscow to protect Feodor and Axinia. It is all in vain; he is himself thrown into prison. Axinia flies to Marfa, and at her feet implores protection against the Poles. Here Demetrius sees her, and a violent and irresistible passion is kindled in his breast. Axinia detests him.

Demetrius as Czar. A fearful element sustains him, but he does not control it: he is urged on by the force of strange passions. His inward consciousness betokens a general distrust; he has no friend on whom he can rely. Poles and Cossacks, by their insolent licentiousness, injure him in the popular opinion. Even that which is creditable to him — his popular manners, simplicity, and contempt of stiff ceremonial, occasions dissatisfaction. Occasionally he offends, through inadvertency, the usages of the country. He persecutes the monks because he suffered severely under them. Moreover, he is not exempt from despotic caprices in the moments of offended pride. Odowalsky knows how to make himself at all times indispensable to him, removes the Russians to a distance, and maintains his overruling influence.

Demetrius meditates inconstancy to Marina. He confers upon the point with the Archbishop Iob, who, in order to get rid of the Poles, falls in with his desire, and puts before him an exalted picture of the imperial power.

Marina appears with a vast retinue in Moscow. Meeting with Demetrius. Hollow and cold meeting on both sides; she, however, wears her disguise with greater

skill. She urges an immediate marriage. Preparations are made for a magnificent festival.

By the orders of Marina a cup of poison is brought to Axinia. Death is welcome to her; she was afraid of being forced to the altar with the Czar.

Violent grief of Demetrius. With a broken heart he goes to the betrothal with Marina.

After the marriage Marina discloses to him that she does not consider him to be the true Demetrius, and never did. She then coldly leaves him in a state of extreme anguish and dismay.

Meanwhile Schinskoi, one of the former generals of the Czar Boris, avails himself of the growing discontent of the people, and becomes the head of a conspiracy against Demetrius.

Romanow, in prison, is comforted by a supernatural apparition. Axinia's spirit stands before him, opens to him a prospect of happier times in store, and enjoins him calmly to allow destiny to ripen, and not to stain himself with blood. Romanow receives a hint that he may himself be called to the throne. Soon afterwards he is solicited to take part in the conspiracy, but declines.

Soltikow reproaches himself bitterly for having betrayed his country to Demetrius. But he will not be a second time a traitor, and adheres, from principle and against his feelings, to the party which he has once adopted. As the misfortune has happened, he seeks at least to alleviate it, and to enfeeble the power of the Poles. He pays for this effort with his life; but he accepts death as a merited punishment, and confesses this when dying to Demetrius himself.

CASIMIR, a brother of LODOISKA, a young Polish lady, who has been secretly and hopelessly attached to Demetrius, in the house of the Waywode of Sendomir, has, at his sister's request, accompanied Demetrius in the campaign, and in every encounter defended him bravely. In the moment of danger, when all the other retainers of Demetrius think only of their personal safety, Casimir alone remains faithful to him, and sacrifices life in his defence.

The conspiracy breaks out. Demetrius is with Marfa when the leading conspirators force their way into the room. The dignity and courage of Demetrius have a momentary effect upon the rebels. He nearly succeeds in disarming them by a promise to place the Poles at their disposal. But at this point SCHINSKOI rushes in with an infuriated band. An explicit declaration is demanded from the ex-empress; she is required to swear, upon the cross, that Demetrius is her son. To testify against her conscience in a manner so solemn is impossible. She turns from Demetrius in silence, and is about to withdraw. "Is she silent?" exclaims the tumultuous throng. "Does she disown him?" "Then, traitor, die!" and Demetrius falls, pierced by their swords, at Marfa's feet.

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With common pewter, which the lowliest dame
Would scorn, they furnish forth her homely table.

PAUL. Thus did she treat her spouse at Stirling once;
And pledged, the while, her paramour in gold.

KEN. Even the mirror's trifling aid withheld.

PAUL. The contemplation of her own vain image
Incites to hope, and prompts to daring deeds.

KEN. Books are denied her to divert her mind.

PAUL. The Bible still is left to mend her heart.

KEN. Even of her very lute she is deprived!

PAUL. Because she tuned it to her wanton airs.

KEN. Is this a fate for her, the gentle born,
Who in her very cradle was a queen?
Who, reared in Catherine's luxurious court,
Enjoyed the fulness of each earthly pleasure?
Wast not enough to rob her of her power,
Must ye then envy her its paltry tinsel?
A noble heart in time resigns itself
To great calamities with fortitude;
But yet it cuts one to the soul to part
At once with all life's little outward trappings!

PAUL. These are the things that turn the human heart
To vanity, which should collect itself
In penitence; for a lewd, vicious life,
Want and abasement are the only penance.

KEN. If youthful blood has led her into error,
With her own heart and God she must account:—
There is no judge in England over her.

PAUL. She shall have judgment where she most
gressed.

KEN. All

The first, best head in all this island fall
A sacrifice for her upon the block?
[The noble house of Howard fell with him.]
And did this sad example terrify
These mad adventurers, whose rival zeal
Plunges for her into this deep abyss?
The bloody scaffold bends beneath the weight
Of her new daily victims; and we ne'er
Shall see an end till she herself, of all
The guiltiest, be offered up upon it.
Oh! curses on the day when England took
This Helen to its hospitable arms.

KEN. Did England then receive her hospitably?
Oh, hapless queen! who, since that fatal day
When first she set her foot within this realm,
And, as a suppliant — a fugitive —
Came to implore protection from her sister,
Has been condemned, despite the law of nations,
And royal privilege, to weep away
The fairest years of youth in prison walls.
And now, when she hath suffered everything
Which in imprisonment is hard and bitter,
Is like a felon summoned to the bar,
Foully accused, and though herself a queen,
Constrained to plead for honor and for life.

PAUL. She came amongst us as a murderess,
Chased by her very subjects from a throne
Which she had oft by vilest deeds disgraced.
[illegible]ainst England's welfare came she hither.
[illegible] Mary back,

And, hourly plotting schemes of mischief, hopes
To conquer, from her prison, all this isle.

KEN. You mock us, sir, and edge your cruelty
With words of bitter scorn: — that she should form
Such projects; she, who's here immured alive,
To whom no sound of comfort, not a voice
Of friendship comes from her beloved home;
Who hath so long no human face beheld,
Save her stern gaoler's unrelenting brows;
Till now, of late, in your uncourteous cousin
She sees a second keeper, and beholds
Fresh bolts and bars against her multiplied.

PAUL. No iron-grate is proof against her wiles.
How do I know these bars are not filed through?
How that this floor, these walls, that seem so strong
Without, may not be hollow from within,
And let in felon treachery when I sleep?
Accursed office, that's intrusted to me,
To guard this cunning mother of all ill!
Fear scares me from my sleep; and in the night
I, like a troubled spirit, roam and try
The strength of every bolt, and put to proof
Each guard's fidelity: — I see, with fear,
The dawning of each morn, which may confirm
My apprehensions: — yet, thank God, there's hope
That all my fears will soon be at an end;
For rather would I at the gates of hell
Stand sentinel, and guard the devilish host
Of damned souls, than this deceitful queen.

KEN. Here comes the queen.

PAULET. Christ's image in her hand
Pride, and all worldly lusts within her heart.

SCENE II.

The same. Enter MARY, *veiled, a crucifix in her hand.*

KENNEDY (*hastening toward her*).
O gracious queen! they tread us under foot;
No end of tyranny and base oppression;
Each coming day heaps fresh indignities,
New sufferings on thy royal head.

MARY. Be calm —
Say, what has happened?
KENNEDY. See! thy cabinet
Is forced — thy papers — and thy only treasure,
Which with such pains we had secured, the last
Poor remnant of thy bridal ornaments
From France, is in his hands — naught now remains
Of royal state — thou art indeed bereft!
MARY. Compose yourself, my Hannah! and believe me,
'Tis not these baubles that can make a queen —
Basely indeed they may behave to us,
But they cannot debase us. I have learned
To use myself to many a change in England;
I can support this too. Sir, you have taken
By force what I this very day designed
To have delivered to you. There's a letter
Amongst these papers for my royal sister
Of England. Pledge me, sir, your word of honor,
To give it to her majesty's own hands,
And not to the deceitful care of Burleigh.
PAUL. I shall consider what is best to do.
MARY. Sir, you shall know its import. In this letter
I beg a favor, a great favor of her, —
That she herself will give me audience, — she!
Whom I have never seen. I have been summoned
Before a court of men, whom I can ne'er
Acknowledge as my peers — of men to whom
My heart denies its confidence. The queen
Is of my family, my rank, my sex;
To her alone — a sister, queen, and woman —
Can I unfold my heart.
PAULET. Too oft, my lady,
Have you intrusted both your fate and honor
To men less worthy your esteem than these.
MARY. I, in the letter, beg another favor,
And surely naught but inhumanity
Can here reject my prayer. These many years
Have I, in prison, missed the church's comfort,
The blessings of the sacraments — and she
Who robs me of my freedom and my crown,

Who seeks my very life, can never wish
To shut the gates of heaven upon my soul.

PAUL. Where'er you wish, the dean shall wait upon you.

MARY (*interrupting him sharply*).
Talk to me not of deans. I ask the aid
Of one of my own church — a Catholic priest.

PAUL. [That is against the published laws of England.

MARY. The laws of England are no rule for me.
I am not England's subject; I have ne'er
Consented to its laws, and will not bow
Before their cruel and despotic sway.
If 'tis your will, to the unheard-of rigor
Which I have borne, to add this new oppression,
I must submit to what your power ordains;
Yet will I raise my voice in loud complaints.]
I also wish a public notary,
And secretaries, to prepare my will —
My sorrows and my prison's wretchedness
Prey on my life — my days, I fear, are numbered —
I feel that I am near the gates of death.

PAUL. These serious contemplations well become you.

MARY. And know I then that some too ready hand
May not abridge this tedious work of sorrow?
I would indite my will and make disposal
Of what belongs to me.

PAUL. This liberty
May be allowed to you, for England's queen
Will not enrich herself by plundering you.

MARY. I have been parted from my faithful women,
And from my servants; tell me, where are they?
What is their fate? I can indeed dispense
At present with their service, but my heart
Will feel rejoiced to know these faithful ones
Are not exposed to suffering and to want!

PAUL. Your servants have been cared for; [and again
You shall behold whate'er is taken from you:
And all shall be restored in proper season.]

[*Going*

MARY. And will you leave my presence thus again,
And not relieve my fearful, anxious heart
From the fell torments of uncertainty?

Thanks to the vigilance of your hateful spies,
I am divided from the world; no voice
Can reach me through these prison-walls; my fate
Lies in the hands of those who wish my ruin.
A month of dread suspense is passed already
Since when the forty high commissioners
Surprised me in this castle, and erected,
With most unseemly haste, their dread tribunal;
They forced me, stunned, amazed, and unprepared,
Without an advocate, from memory,
Before their unexampled court, to answer
Their weighty charges, artfully arranged.
They came like ghosts, — like ghosts they disappeared,
And since that day all mouths are closed to me.
In vain I seek to construe from your looks
Which hath prevailed — my cause's innocence
And my friends' zeal — or my foes' cursed counsel.
Oh, break this silence! let me know the worst;
What have I still to fear, and what to hope.

PAUL. Close your accounts with heaven.

MARY. From heaven I hope
For mercy, sir; and from my earthly judges
I hope, and still expect, the strictest justice.

PAUL. Justice, depend upon it, will be done you.

MARY. Is the suit ended, sir?

PAULET. I cannot tell.

MARY. Am I condemned?

PAUL. I cannot answer, lady.

MARY. [Sir, a good work fears not the light of day.

PAUL. The day will shine upon it, doubt it not.]

MARY. Despatch is here the fashion. Is it meant
The murderer shall surprise me, like the judges?

PAUL. Still entertain that thought and he will find you
Better prepared to meet your fate than they did.

MARY (*after a pause*).
Sir, nothing can surprise me which a court
Inspired by Burleigh's hate and Hatton's zeal,
Howe'er unjust, may venture to pronounce:
But I have yet to learn how far the queen
Will dare in execution of the sentence.

PAUL. The sovereigns of England have no fear
But for their conscience and their parliament.
What justice hath decreed her fearless hand
Will execute before the assembled world.

SCENE III.

The same. MORTIMER *enters, and without paying attention to the* QUEEN, *addresses* PAULET.

MORT. Uncle, you're sought for.
[*He retires in the same manner. The* QUEEN *remarks it, and turns towards* PAULET, *who is about to follow him.*
MARY. Sir, one favor more:
If you have aught to say to me — from you
I can bear much — I reverence your gray hairs;
But cannot bear that young man's insolence;
Spare me in future his unmannered rudeness.
PAUL. I prize him most for that which makes you hate him:
He is not, truly, one of those poor fools
Who melt before a woman's treacherous tears.
He has seen much — has been to Rheims and Paris,
And brings us back his true old English heart.
Lady, your cunning arts are lost on him. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

MARY, KENNEDY.

KEN. And dare the ruffian venture to your face
Such language! Oh, 'tis hard — tis past endurance.
MARY (*lost in reflection*).
In the fair moments of our former splendor
We lent to flatterers a too willing ear; —
It is but just, good Hannah, we should now
Be forced to hear the bitter voice of censure.
KEN. So downcast, so depressed, my dearest lady?
You, who before so gay, so full of hope,
Were used to comfort me in my distress;
More gracious were the task to check your mirth
Than chide your heavy sadness.

MARY. Well I know him —
It is the bleeding Darnley's royal shade,
Rising in anger from his darksome grave:
And never will he make his peace with me
Until the measures of my woes be full.
KEN. What thoughts are these —
MARY. Thou may'st forget it, Hannah!
But I've a faithful memory — 'tis this day
Another wretched anniversary
Of that regretted, that unhappy deed —
Which I must celebrate with fast and penance.
KEN. Dismiss at length in peace this evil spirit.
The penitence of many a heavy year,
Of many a suffering, has atoned the deed;
The church, which holds the key of absolution,
Pardons the crime, and heaven itself's appeased.
MARY. This long-atoned crime arises fresh
And bleeding from its lightly-covered grave;
My husband's restless spirit seeks revenge;
No sacred bell can exorcise, no host
In priestly hands dismiss it to his tomb.
KEN. You did not murder him; 'twas done by others.
MARY. But it was known to me; I suffered it,
And lured him with my smiles to death's embrace.
KEN. Your youth extenuates your guilt. You were
Of tender years.
MARY. So tender, yet I drew
This heavy guilt upon my youthful head.
KEN. You were provoked by direst injuries,
And by the rude presumption of the man,
Whom out of darkness, like the hand of heaven,
Your love drew forth, and raised above all others.
Whom through your bridal chamber you conducted
Up to your throne, and with your lovely self,
And your hereditary crown, distinguished:
[Your work was his existence, and your grace
Bedewed him like the gentle rains of heaven.]
Could he forget that his so splendid lot
Was the creation of your generous love?
Yet did he, worthless as he was, forget it.
With base suspicions, and with brutal manners.

He wearied your affections, and became
An object to you of deserved disgust:
The illusion, which till now had overcast
Your judgment, vanished; angrily you fled
His foul embrace, and gave him up to scorn.
And did he seek again to win your love?
Your favor? Did he e'er implore your pardon?
Or fall in deep repentance at your feet?
No; the base wretch defied you; he, who was
Your bounty's creature, wished to play your king,
[And strove, through fear, to force your inclination.]
Before your eyes he had your favorite singer,
Poor Rizzio, murdered; you did but avenge
With blood the bloody deed ——

MARY. And bloodily,
I fear, too soon 'twill be avenged on me:
You seek to comfort me, and you condemn me.

KEN. You were, when you consented to this deed,
No more yourself; belonged not to yourself;
The madness of a frantic love possessed you,
And bound you to a terrible seducer,
The wretched Bothwell. That despotic man
Ruled you with shameful, overbearing will,
And with his philters and his hellish arts
Inflamed your passions.

MARY. All the arts he used
Were man's superior strength and woman's weakness.

KEN. No, no, I say. The most pernicious spirits
Of hell he must have summoned to his aid,
To cast this mist before your waking senses.
Your ear no more was open to the voice
Of friendly warning, and your eyes were shut
To decency; soft female bashfulness
Deserted you; those cheeks, which were before
The seat of virtuous, blushing modesty,
Glowed with the flames of unrestrained desire.
You cast away the veil of secrecy,
And the flagitious daring of the man
O'ercame your natural coyness: you exposed
Your shame, unblushingly, to public gaze:
You let the murderer, whom the people followed

With curses, through the streets of Edinburgh,
Before you bear the royal sword of Scotland
In triumph. You begirt your parliament
With armed bands; and by this shameless farce,
There, in the very temple of great justice,
You forced the judges of the land to clear
The murderer of his guilt. You went still further—
O God!

MARY. Conclude—nay, pause not—say for this
I gave my hand in marriage at the altar.

KEN. O let an everlasting silence veil
That dreadful deed: the heart revolts at it.
A crime to stain the darkest criminal!
Yet you are no such lost one, that I know.
I nursed your youth myself—your heart is framed
For tender softness: 'tis alive to shame,
And all your fault is thoughtless levity.
Yes, I repeat it, there are evil spirits,
Who sudden fix in man's unguarded breast
Their fatal residence, and there delight
To act their dev'lish deeds; then hurry back
Unto their native hell, and leave behind
Remorse and horror in the poisoned bosom.
Since this misdeed, which blackens thus your life,
You have done nothing ill; your conduct has
Been pure; myself can witness your amendment.
Take courage, then; with your own heart make peace.
Whatever cause you have for penitence,
You are not guilty here. Nor England's queen,
Nor England's parliament can be your judge.
Here might oppresses you: you may present
Yourself before this self-created court
With all the fortitude of innocence.

MARY. I hear a step.

KENNEDY. It is the nephew—In.

SCENE V.

The same. *Enter* MORTIMER, *approaching cautiously.*

MORTIMER (*to* KENNEDY).
Step to the door, and keep a careful watch,
I have important business with the queen.

MARY (*with dignity*).
I charge thee, Hannah, go not hence — remain.
MORT. Fear not, my gracious lady — learn to know me.
[*He gives her a card.*
MARY. [*She examines it, and starts back astonished.*
Heavens! What is this?
MORTIMER (*to* KENNEDY). Retire, good Kennedy;
See that my uncle comes not unawares.
MARY (*to* KENNEDY, *who hesitates, and looks at the* QUEEN *inquiringly*).
Go in; do as he bids you.
[KENNEDY *retires with signs of wonder.*

SCENE VI.

MARY, MORTIMER.

MARY. From my uncle
In France — the worthy Cardinal of Lorrain?
[*She reads.*
"Confide in Mortimer, who brings you this;
You have no truer, firmer friend in England."
[*Looking at him with astonishment.*
Can I believe it? Is there no delusion
To cheat my senses? Do I find a friend
So near, when I conceived myself abandoned
By the whole world? And find that friend in you,
The nephew of my gaoler, whom I thought
My most inveterate enemy?
MORTIMER (*kneeling*). Oh, pardon,
My gracious liege, for the detested mask,
Which it has cost me pain enough to wear;
Yet through such means alone have I the power
To see you, and to bring you help and rescue.
MARY. Arise, sir; you astonish me; I cannot
So suddenly emerge from the abyss
Of wretchedness to hope: let me conceive
This happiness, that I may credit it.
MORT. Our time is brief: each moment I expect
My uncle, whom a hated man attends;
Hear, then, before his terrible commission
Surprises you, how heaven prepares your rescue.

MARY. You come in token of its wondrous power.
MORT. Allow me of myself to speak.
MARY. Say on.
MORT. I scarce, my liege, had numbered twenty years,
Trained in the path of strictest discipline
And nursed in deadliest hate to papacy,
When led by irresistible desire
For foreign travel, I resolved to leave
My country and its puritanic faith
Far, far behind me: soon with rapid speed
I flew through France, and bent my eager course
On to the plains of far-famed Italy.
'Twas then the time of the great jubilee:—
And crowds of palmers filled the public roads;
Each image was adorned with garlands; 'twas
As if all human-kind were wandering forth
In pilgrimage towards the heavenly kingdom.
The tide of the believing multitude
Bore me too onward, with resistless force,
Into the streets of Rome. What was my wonder,
As the magnificence of stately columns
Rushed on my sight! the vast triumphal arches,
The Colosseum's grandeur, with amazement
Struck my admiring senses; the sublime
Creative spirit held my soul a prisoner
In the fair world of wonders it had framed.
I ne'er had felt the power of art till now.
The church that reared me hates the charms of sense;
It tolerates no image, it adores
But the unseen, the incorporeal word.
What were my feelings, then, as I approached
The threshold of the churches, and within,
Heard heavenly music floating in the air:
While from the walls and high-wrought roofs there streamed
Crowds of celestial forms in endless train —
When the Most High, Most Glorious pervaded
My captivated sense in real presence!
And when I saw the great and godlike visions,
The Salutation, the Nativity,

The Holy Mother, and the Trinity's
Descent, the luminous transfiguration:
And last the holy pontiff, clad in all
The glory of his office, bless the people!
Oh! what is all the pomp of gold and jewels
With which the kings of earth adorn themselves!
He is alone surrounded by the Godhead;
His mansion is in truth an heavenly kingdom,
For not of earthly moulding are these forms!

MARY. O spare me, sir! No further. Spread no more
Life's verdant carpet out before my eyes,
Remember I am wretched, and a prisoner.

MORT. I was a prisoner, too, my queen; but swift
My prison-gates flew open, when at once
My spirit felt its liberty, and hailed
The smiling dawn of life. I learned to burst
Each narrow prejudice of education,
To crown my brow with never-fading wreaths,
And mix my joy with the rejoicing crowd.
Full many noble Scots, who saw my zeal,
Encouraged me, and with the gallant French
They kindly led me to your princely uncle,
The Cardinal of Guise. Oh, what a man!
How firm, how clear, how manly, and how great!
Born to control the human mind at will!
The very model of a royal priest;
A ruler of the church without an equal!

MARY. You've seen him then, — the much loved, honored man,
Who was the guardian of my tender years!
Oh, speak of him! Does he remember me?
Does fortune favor him? And prospers still
His life? And does he still majestic stand,
A very rock and pillar of the church?

MORT. The holy man descended from his height,
And deigned to teach me the important creed
Of the true church, and dissipate my doubts.
He showed me how the glimmering light of reason
Serves but to lead us to eternal error:
That what the heart is called on to believe
The eye must see: that he who rules the church

Must needs be visible; and that the spirit
Of truth inspired the councils of the fathers.
How vanished then the fond imaginings
And weak conceptions of my childish soul
Before his conquering judgment, and the soft
Persuasion of his tongue! So I returned
Back to the bosom of the holy church,
And at his feet abjured my heresies.

MARY. Then of those happy thousands you are one,
Whom he, with his celestial eloquence,
Like the immortal preacher of the mount,
Has turned and led to everlasting joy!

MORT. The duties of his office called him soon
To France, and I was sent by him to Rheims,
Where, by the Jesuits' anxious labor, priests
Are trained to preach our holy faith in England.
There, 'mongst the Scots, I found the noble Morgan
And your true Lesley, Ross's learned bishop,
Who pass in France their joyless days of exile.
I joined with heartfelt zeal these worthy men,
And fortified my faith. As I one day
Roamed through the bishop's dwelling, I was struck
With a fair female portrait; it was full
Of touching wond'rous charms; with magic might
It moved my inmost soul, and there I stood
Speechless, and overmastered by my feelings.
"Well," cried the bishop, "may you linger thus
In deep emotion near this lovely face!
For the most beautiful of womankind,
Is also matchless in calamity.
She is a prisoner for our holy faith,
And in your native land, alas! she suffers."

[MARY *is in great agitation. He pauses.*

MARY. Excellent man! All is not lost, indeed,
While such a friend remains in my misfortunes!

MORT. Then he began, with moving eloquence,
To paint the sufferings of your martyrdom;
He showed me then your lofty pedigree,
And your descent from Tudor's royal house.
He proved to me that you alone have right
To reign in England, not this upstart queen,

The base-born fruit of an adult'rous bed,
Whom Henry's self rejected as a bastard.
[He from my eyes removed delusion's mist,
And taught me to lament you as a victim,
To honor you as my true queen, whom I,
Deceived, like thousands of my noble fellows,
Had ever hated as my country's foe.]
I would not trust his evidence alone;
I questioned learned doctors; I consulted
The most authentic books of heraldry;
And every man of knowledge whom I asked
Confirmed to me your claim's validity.
And now I know that your undoubted right
To England's throne has been your only wrong,
This realm is justly yours by heritage,
In which you innocently pine as prisoner.

MARY. Oh, this unhappy right! — 'tis this alone
Which is the source of all my sufferings.

MORT. Just at this time the tidings reached my ears
Of your removal from old Talbot's charge,
And your committal to my uncle's care.
It seemed to me that this disposal marked
The wond'rous, outstretched hand of favoring heaven;
It seemed to be a loud decree of fate,
That it had chosen me to rescue you.
My friends concur with me; the cardinal
Bestows on me his counsel and his blessing,
And tutors me in the hard task of feigning.
The plan in haste digested, I commenced
My journey homewards, and ten days ago
On England's shores I landed. Oh, my queen.
[*He pauses.*
I saw then, not your picture, but yourself —
Oh, what a treasure do these walls enclose!
No prison this, but the abode of gods,
More splendid far than England's royal court.
Happy, thrice happy he, whose envied lot
Permits to breathe the selfsame air with you!
It is a prudent policy in her
To bury you so deep! All England's youth
Would rise at once in general mutiny,

And not a sword lie quiet in its sheath:
Rebellion would uprear its giant head,
Through all this peaceful isle, if Britons once
Beheld their captive queen.

MARY. 'Twere well with her,
If every Briton saw her with your eyes!

MORT. Were each, like me, a witness of your wrongs,
Your meekness, and the noble fortitude
With which you suffer these indignities —
Would you not then emerge from all these trials
Like a true queen? Your prison's infamy,
Hath it despoiled your beauty of its charms?
You are deprived of all that graces life,
Yet round you life and light eternal beam.
Ne'er on this threshold can I set my foot,
That my poor heart with anguish is not torn,
Nor ravished with delight at gazing on you.
Yet fearfully the fatal time draws near,
And danger hourly growing presses on.
I can delay no longer — can no more
Conceal the dreadful news.

MARY. My sentence then!
It is pronounced? Speak freely — I can bear it.

MORT. It is pronounced! The two-and-forty judges
Have given the verdict, "guilty"; and the Houses
Of Lords and Commons, with the citizens
Of London, eagerly and urgently
Demand the execution of the sentence: —
The queen alone still craftily delays,
That she may be constrained to yield, but not
From feelings of humanity or mercy.

MARY (*collected*).
Sir, I am not surprised, nor terrified.
I have been long prepared for such a message.
Too well I know my judges. After all
Their cruel treatment I can well conceive
They dare not now restore my liberty.
I know their aim: they mean to keep me here
In everlasting bondage, and to bury,
In the sepulchral darkness of my prison,
My vengeance with me, and my rightful claims.

MORT. Oh, no, my gracious queen; — they stop not there:
Oppression will not be content to do
Its work by halves: — as long as e'en you live,
Distrust and fear will haunt the English queen.
No dungeon can inter you deep enough;
Your death alone can make her throne secure.
MARY. Will she then dare, regardless of the shame,
Lay my crowned head upon the fatal block?
MORT. She will most surely dare it, doubt it not.
MARY. And can she thus roll in the very dust
Her own, and every monarch's majesty?
MORT. She thinks on nothing now but present danger,
Nor looks to that which is so far removed.
MARY. And fears she not the dread revenge of France?
MORT. With France she makes an everlasting peace;
And gives to Anjou's duke her throne and hand.
MARY. Will not the King of Spain rise up in arms?
MORT. She fears not a collected world in arms?
If with her people she remains at peace.
MARY. Were this a spectacle for British eyes?
MORT. This land, my queen, has, in these latter days,
Seen many a royal woman from the throne
Descend and mount the scaffold: — her own mother
And Catherine Howard trod this fatal path;
And was not Lady Grey a crowned head?
MARY (*after a pause*).
No, Mortimer, vain fears have blinded you;
'Tis but the honest care of your true heart,
Which conjures up these empty apprehensions.
It is not, sir, the scaffold that I fear:
There are so many still and secret means
By which her majesty of England may
Set all my claims to rest. Oh, trust me, ere
An executioner is found for me,
Assassins will be hired to do their work.
'Tis that which makes me tremble, Mortimer:
I never lift the goblet to my lips
Without an inward shuddering, lest the draught
May have been mingled by my sister's love.
MORT. No: — neither open or disguised murder
Shall e'er prevail against you: — fear no more;

All is prepared; — twelve nobles of the land
Are my confederates, and have pledged to-day,
Upon the sacrament, their faith to free you,
With dauntless arm, from this captivity.
Count Aubespine, the French ambassador,
Knows of our plot, and offers his assistance:
'Tis in his palace that we hold our meetings.

MARY. You make me tremble, sir, but not for joy!
An evil boding penetrates my heart.
Know you, then, what you risk? Are you not scared
By Babington and Tichburn's bloody heads,
Set up as warnings upon London's bridge?
Nor by the ruin of those many victims
Who have, in such attempts, found certain death,
And only made my chains the heavier?
Fly hence, deluded, most unhappy youth!
Fly, if there yet be time for you, before
That crafty spy, Lord Burleigh, track your schemes,
And mix his traitors in your secret plots.
Fly hence: — as yet, success hath never smiled
On Mary Stuart's champions.

MORTIMER. I am not scared
By Babington and Tichburn's bloody heads
Set up as warnings upon London's bridge;
Nor by the ruin of those many victims
Who have, in such attempts, found certain death:
They also found therein immortal honor,
And death, in rescuing you, is dearest bliss.

MARY. It is in vain: nor force nor guile can save me: —
My enemies are watchful, and the power
Is in their hands. It is not Paulet only
And his dependent host; all England guards
My prison gates: Elizabeth's free will
Alone can open them.

MORTIMER. Expect not that.

MARY. One man alone on earth can open them.

MORT. Oh, let me know his name!

MARY. Lord Leicester.

MORTIMER. He!

[*Starts back in wonder.*

The Earl of Leicester! Your most bloody foe,
The favorite of Elizabeth! through him ——

MARY. If I am to be saved at all, 'twill be
Through him, and him alone. Go to him, sir;
Freely confide in him: and, as a proof
You come from me, present this paper to him.

[*She takes a paper from her bosom;* MORTIMER *draws back, and hesitates to take it.*

It doth contain my portrait: — take it, sir;
I've borne it long about me; but your uncle's
Close watchfulness has cut me off from all
Communication with him; — you were sent
By my good angel. [*He takes it.*

MORTIMER. Oh, my queen! explain
This mystery.

MARY. Lord Leicester will resolve it.
Confide in him, and he'll confide in you.
Who comes?

KENNEDY (*entering hastily*).
'Tis Paulet; and he brings with him
A nobleman from court.

MORTIMER. It is Lord Burleigh.
Collect yourself, my queen, and strive to hear
The news he brings with equanimity.

[*He retires through a side door, and* KENNEDY *follows him.*

SCENE VII.

Enter LORD BURLEIGH, *and* PAULET.

PAULET (*to* MARY).
You wished to-day assurance of your fate;
My Lord of Burleigh brings it to you now;
Hear it with resignation, as beseems you.

MARY. I hope with dignity, as it becomes
My innocence, and my exalted station.

BUR. I come deputed from the court of justice.

MARY. Lord Burleigh lends that court his willing tongue,
Which was already guided by his spirit.

PAUL. You speak as if no stranger to the sentence.

MARY. Lord Burleigh brings it; therefore do I know it

PAUL. [It would become you better, Lady Stuart,
To listen less to hatred.
MARY. I but name
My enemy: I said not that I hate him.]
But to the matter, sir.
BURLEIGH. You have acknowledged
The jurisdiction of the two-and-forty.
MARY. My lord, excuse me, if I am obliged
So soon to interrupt you. I acknowledged,
Say you, the competence of the commission?
I never have acknowledged it, my lord;
How could I so? I could not give away
My own prerogative, the intrusted rights
Of my own people, the inheritance
Of my own son, and every monarch's honor
[The very laws of England say I could not.]
It is enacted by the English laws
That every one who stands arraigned of crime
Shall plead before a jury of his equals:
Who is my equal in this high commission?
Kings only are my peers.
BURLEIGH. But yet you heard
The points of accusation, answered them
Before the court ——
MARY. 'Tis true, I was deceived
By Hatton's crafty counsel: — he advised me,
For my own honor, and in confidence
In my good cause, and my most strong defence,
To listen to the points of accusation,
And prove their falsehoods. This, my lord, I did
From personal respect for the lords' names,
Not their usurped charge, which I disclaim.
BUR. Acknowledge you the court, or not, that is
Only a point of mere formality,
Which cannot here arrest the course of justice.
You breathe the air of England; you enjoy
The law's protection, and its benefits;
You therefore are its subject.
MARY. Sir, I breathe
The air within an English prison walls: —
Is that to live in England; to enjoy

Protection from its laws? I scarcely know
And never have I pledged my faith to keep them.
I am no member of this realm; I am
An independent, and a foreign queen.

BUR. And do you think that the mere name of queen
Can serve you as a charter to foment
In other countries, with impunity,
This bloody discord? Where would be the state's
Security, if the stern sword of justice
Could not as freely smite the guilty brow
Of the imperial stranger as the beggar's?

MARY. I do not wish to be exempt from judgment,
It is the judges only I disclaim.

BUR. The judges? How now, madam? Are they then
Base wretches, snatched at hazard from the crowd?
Vile wranglers that make sale of truth and justice;
Oppression's willing hirelings, and its tools?
Are they not all the foremost of this land,
Too independent to be else than honest,
And too exalted not to soar above
The fear of kings, or base servility?
Are they not those who rule a generous people
In liberty and justice; men, whose names
I need but mention to dispel each doubt,
Each mean suspicion which is raised against them?
Stands not the reverend primate at their head,
The pious shepherd of his faithful people,
The learned Talbot, keeper of the seals,
And Howard, who commands our conquering fleets?
Say, then, could England's sovereign do more
Than, out of all the monarchy, elect
The very noblest, and appoint them judges
In this great suit? And were it probable
That party hatred could corrupt one heart;
Can forty chosen men unite to speak
A sentence just as passion gives command?

MARY (*after a short pause*).
I am struck dumb by that tongue's eloquence,
Which ever was so ominous to me.
And how shall I, a weak, untutored woman,
Cope with so subtle, learned an orator?

Yes truly; were these lords as you describe them,
I must be mute; my cause were lost indeed,
Beyond all hope, if they pronounce me guilty.
But, sir, these names, which you are pleased to praise,
These very men, whose weight you think will crush me,
I see performing in the history
Of these dominions very different parts:
I see this high nobility of England,
This grave majestic senate of the realm,
Like to an eastern monarch's vilest slaves,
Flatter my uncle Henry's sultan fancies:
I see this noble, reverend House of Lords,
Venal alike with the corrupted Commons,
Make statutes and annul them, ratify
A marriage and dissolve it, as the voice
Of power commands: to-day it disinherits,
And brands the royal daughters of the realm
With the vile name of bastards, and to-morrow
Crowns them as queens, and leads them to the throne.
I see them in four reigns, with pliant conscience,
Four times abjure their faith; renounce the pope
With Henry, yet retain the old belief;
Reform themselves with Edward; hear the mass
Again with Mary; with Elizabeth,
Who governs now, reform themselves again.

BUR. You say you are not versed in England's laws,
You seem well read, methinks, in her disasters.

MARY. And these men are my judges?
[*As* LORD BURLEIGH *seems to wish to speak.*
My lord treasurer,
Towards you I will be just, be you but just
To me. 'Tis said that you consult with zeal
The good of England, and of England's queen;
Are honest, watchful, indefatigable;
I will believe it. Not your private ends,
Your sovereign and your country's weal alone,
Inspire your counsels and direct your deeds.
Therefore, my noble lord, you should the more
Distrust your heart; should see that you mistake not
The welfare of the government for justice.

I do not doubt, besides yourself, there are
Among my judges many upright men:
But they are Protestants, are eager all
For England's quiet, and they sit in judgment
On me, the Queen of Scotland, and the papist.
It is an ancient saying, that the Scots
And England to each other are unjust;
And hence the rightful custom that a Scot
Against an Englishman, or Englishman
Against a Scot, cannot be heard in judgment.
Necessity prescribed this cautious law;
Deep policy oft lies in ancient customs:
My lord, we must respect them. Nature cast
Into the ocean these two fiery nations
Upon this plank, and she divided it
Unequally, and bade them fight for it.
The narrow bed of Tweed alone divides
These daring spirits; often hath the blood
Of the contending parties dyed its waves.
Threatening, and sword in hand, these thousand years,
From both its banks they watch their rival's motions,
Most vigilant and true confederates,
With every enemy of the neighbor state.
No foe oppresses England, but the Scot
Becomes his firm ally; no civil war
Inflames the towns of Scotland, but the English
Add fuel to the fire: this raging hate
Will never be extinguished till, at last,
One parliament in concord shall unite them,
One common sceptre rule throughout the isle.

BUR. And from a Stuart, then, should England hope
This happiness?

MARY. Oh! why should I deny it?
Yes, I confess, I cherished the fond hope;
I thought myself the happy instrument
To join in freedom, 'neath the olive's shade,
Two generous realms in lasting happiness!
I little thought I should become the victim
Of their old hate, their long-lived jealousy;

And the sad flames of that unhappy strife,
I hoped at last to smother, and forever:
And, as my ancestor, great Richmond, joined
The rival roses after bloody contest,
To join in peace the Scotch and English crowns.

BUR. An evil way you took to this good end,
To set the realm on fire, and through the flames
Of civil war to strive to mount the throne.

MARY. I wished not that: — I wished it not, by Heaven!
When did I strive at that? Where are your proofs?

BUR. I came not hither to dispute; your cause
Is no more subject to a war of words.
The great majority of forty voices
Hath found that you have contravened the law
Last year enacted, and have now incurred
Its penalty. [*Producing the verdict.*

MARY. Upon this statute, then,
My lord, is built the verdict of my judges?

BURLEIGH (*reading*).
Last year it was enacted, "If a plot
Henceforth should rise in England, in the name
Or for the benefit of any claimant
To England's crown, that justice should be done
On such pretender, and the guilty party
Be prosecuted unto death." Now, since
It has been proved ——

MARY. Lord Burleigh, I can well
Imagine that a law expressly aimed
At me, and framed to compass my destruction
May to my prejudice be used. Oh! woe
To the unhappy victim, when the tongue
That frames the law shall execute the sentence.
Can you deny it, sir, that this same statute
Was made for my destruction, and naught else?

BUR. It should have acted as a warning to you:
By your imprudence it became a snare.
You saw the precipice which yawned before you;
Yet, truly warned, you plunged into the deep.
With Babington, the traitor, and his bands
Of murderous companions, were you leagued.

You knew of all, and from your prison led
Their treasonous plottings with a deep-laid plan.

MARY. When did I that, my lord? Let them produce
The documents.

BURLEIGH. You have already seen them:
They were before the court, presented to you.

MARY. Mere copies written by another hand;
Show me the proof that they were dictated
By me, that they proceeded from my lips,
And in those very terms in which you read them.

BUR. Before his execution, Babington
Confessed they were the same which he received.

MARY. Why was he in his lifetime not produced
Before my face? Why was he then despatched
So quickly that he could not be confronted
With her whom he accused?

BURLEIGH. Besides, my lady,
Your secretaries, Curl and Nau, declare
On oath, they are the very selfsame letters
Which from your lips they faithfully transcribed.

MARY. And on my menials' testimony, then,
I am condemned; upon the word of those
Who have betrayed me, me, their rightful queen!
Who in that very moment, when they came
As witnesses against me, broke their faith!

BUR. You said yourself, you held your countryman
To be an upright, conscientious man.

MARY. I thought him such; but 'tis the hour of danger
Alone, which tries the virtue of a man.
[He ever was an honest man, but weak
In understanding; and his subtle comrade,
Whose faith, observe, I never answered for,
Might easily seduce him to write down
More than he should;] the rack may have compelled
him
To say and to confess more than he knew.
He hoped to save himself by this false witness,
And thought it could not injure me — a queen.

BUR. The oath he swore was free and unconstrained.

MARY. But not before my face! How now, my lord?
The witnesses you name are still alive;

Let them appear against me face to face,
And there repeat what they have testified.
Why am I then denied that privilege,
That right which e'en the murderer enjoys?
I know from Talbot's mouth, my former keeper,
That in this reign a statute has been passed
Which orders that the plaintiff be confronted
With the defendant; is it so, good Paulet?
I e'er have known you as an honest man;
Now prove it to me; tell me, on your conscience,
If such a law exist or not in England?

PAUL. Madam, there does: that is the law in England.
I must declare the truth.

MARY. Well, then, my lord,
If I am treated by the law of England
So hardly, when that law oppresses me,
Say, why avoid this selfsame country's law,
When 'tis for my advantage? Answer me;
Why was not Babington confronted with me?
Why not my servants, who are both alive?

BUR. Be not so hasty, lady; 'tis not only
Your plot with Babington ——

MARY. 'Tis that alone
Which arms the law against me; that alone
From which I'm called upon to clear myself.
Stick to the point, my lord; evade it not.

BUR. It has been proved that you have corresponded
With the ambassador of Spain, Mendoza ——

MARY. Stick to the point, my lord.

BURLEIGH. That you have formed
Conspiracies to overturn the fixed
Religion of the realm; that you have called
Into this kingdom foreign powers, and roused
All kings in Europe to a war with England.

MARY. And were it so, my lord — though I deny it —
But e'en suppose it were so: I am kept
Imprisoned here against all laws of nations.
I came not into England sword in hand;
I came a suppliant; and at the hands
Of my imperial kinswoman I claimed
The sacred rights of hospitality,

When power seized upon me, and prepared
To rivet fetters where I hoped protection.
Say, is my conscience bound, then, to this realm?
What are the duties that I owe to England?
I should but exercise a sacred right,
Derived from sad necessity, if I
Warred with these bonds, encountered might with might,
Roused and incited every state in Europe
For my protection to unite in arms.
Whatever in a rightful war is just
And loyal, 'tis my right to exercise:
Murder alone, the secret, bloody deed,
My conscience and my pride alike forbid.
Murder would stain me, would dishonor me:
Dishonor me, my lord, but not condemn me,
Nor subject me to England's courts of law:
For 'tis not justice, but mere violence,
Which is the question 'tween myself and England.

BURLEIGH (*significantly*).
Talk not, my lady, of the dreadful right
Of power: 'tis seldom on the prisoner's side.

MARY. I am the weak, she is the mighty one:
'Tis well, my lord; let her, then, use her power;
Let her destroy me; let me bleed, that she
May live secure; but let her, then, confess
That she hath exercised her power alone,
And not contaminate the name of justice.
Let her not borrow from the laws the sword
To rid her of her hated enemy;
Let her not clothe in this religious garb
The bloody daring of licentious might;
Let not these juggling tricks deceive the world.
[*Returning the sentence.*
Though she may murder me, she cannot judge me:
Let her no longer strive to join the fruits
Of vice with virtue's fair and angel show;
But let her dare to seem the thing she is. [*Exit.*

Scene VIII.

Burleigh, Paulet.

Bur. She scorns us, she defies us! will defy us,
Even at the scaffold's foot. This haughty heart
Is not to be subdued. Say, did the sentence
Surprise her? Did you see her shed one tear,
Or even change her color? She disdains
To make appeal to our compassion. Well
She knows the wavering mind of England's queen.
Our apprehensions make her bold.
Paulet. My lord,
Take the pretext away which buoys it up,
And you shall see this proud defiance fail
That very moment. I must say, my lord,
Irregularities have been allowed
In these proceedings; Babington and Ballard
Should have been brought, with her two secretaries,
Before her, face to face.
Burleigh. No, Paulet, no.
That was not to be risked; her influence
Upon the human heart is too supreme;
Too strong the female empire of her tears.
Her secretary, Curl, if brought before her,
And called upon to speak the weighty word
On which her life depends, would straight shrink back
And fearfully revoke his own confession.
Paul. Then England's enemies will fill the world
With evil rumors; and the formal pomp
Of these proceedings to the minds of all
Will only signalize an act of outrage.
Bur. That is the greatest torment of our queen,
[That she can never 'scape the blame. Oh God!]
Had but this lovely mischief died before
She set her faithless foot on English ground.
Paul. Amen, say I!
Burleigh. Had sickness but consumed her!
Paul. England had been secured from such misfortune.

BUR. Who, when a poisonous adder is delivered
Into their hands, would keep the treacherous charge
As if it were a sacred, precious jewel?
PAUL. A precious jewel is the queen's good name
And spotless reputation: good my lord,
One cannot guard it with sufficient care.
BUR. When out of Shrewsbury's hands the Queen of Scots
Was trusted to Sir Amias Paulet's care,
The meaning was ——
PAULET. I hope to God, my lord,
The meaning was to give the weightiest charge
Into the purest hands; my lord, my lord!
By heaven I had disdained this bailiff's office
Had I not thought the service claimed the care
Of the best man that England's realm can boast.
Let me not think I am indebted for it
To anything but my unblemished name.
BUR. Spread the report she wastes; grows sicker still
And sicker; and expires at last in peace;
Thus will she perish in the world's remembrance,
And your good name is pure.
PAULET. But not my conscience.
BUR. Though you refuse us, sir, your own assistance,
You will not sure prevent another's hand.
PAUL. No murderer's foot shall e'er approach her threshold
Whilst she's protected by my household gods.
Her life's a sacred trust; to me the head
Of Queen Elizabeth is not more sacred.
Ye are the judges; judge, and break the staff;
And when 'tis time then let the carpenter
With axe and saw appear to build the scaffold.
My castle's portals shall be open to him,
The sheriff and the executioners:
Till then she is intrusted to my care;
And be assured I will fulfil my trust,
She shall nor do nor suffer what's unjust. [*Exeunt.*

BUR. And yet, if she had died in nature's course,
The world would still have called us murderers.
PAUL. 'Tis true, the world will think, despite of us,
Whate'er it list.
BURLEIGH. Yet could it not be proved?
And it would make less noise.
PAULET. Why, let it make
What noise it may. It is not clamorous blame,
'Tis righteous censure only which can wound.
BUR. We know that holy justice cannot 'scape
The voice of censure; and the public cry
Is ever on the side of the unhappy:
Envy pursues the laurelled conqueror;
The sword of justice, which adorns the man,
Is hateful in a woman's hand; the world
Will give no credit to a woman's justice
If woman be the victim. Vain that we,
The judges, spoke what conscience dictated;
She has the royal privilege of mercy;
She must exert it: 'twere not to be borne,
Should she let justice take its full career.
PAUL. And therefore ——
BURLEIGH. Therefore should she live? Oh, no,
She must not live; it must not be. 'Tis this,
Even this, my friend, which so disturbs the queen,
And scares all slumber from her couch; I read
Her soul's distracting contest in her eyes:
She fears to speak her wishes, yet her looks,
Her silent looks, significantly ask,
"Is there not one amongst my many servants
To save me from this sad alternative?
Either to tremble in eternal fear
Upon my throne, or else to sacrifice
A queen of my own kindred on the block?"
PAUL. 'Tis even so; nor can it be avoided ——
BUR. Well might it be avoided, thinks the queen,
If she had only more attentive servants.
PAUL. How more attentive?
BURLEIGH. Such as could interpret
A silent mandate.
PAULET. What? A silent mandate!

ACT II.

Scene I.

London, a Hall in the Palace of Westminster. The Earl of Kent *and* Sir William Davison *meeting.*

Dav. Is that my Lord of Kent? So soon returned?
Is then the tourney, the carousal over?
Kent. How now? Were you not present at the tilt?
Dav. My office kept me here.
Kent. Believe me, sir,
You've lost the fairest show which ever state
Devised, or graceful dignity performed:
For beauty's virgin fortress was presented
As by desire invested; the Earl-Marshal,
The Lord-High Admiral, and ten other knights
Belonging to the queen defended it,
And France's cavaliers led the attack.
A herald marched before the gallant troop,
And summoned, in a madrigal, the fortress;
And from the walls the chancellor replied;
And then the artillery was played, and nosegays
Breathing delicious fragrance were discharged
From neat field-pieces; but in vain, the storm
Was valiantly resisted, and desire
Was forced, unwillingly, to raise the siege.
Dav. A sign of evil-boding, good my lord,
For the French suitors.
Kent. Why, you know that this
Was but in sport; when the attack's in earnest
The fortress will, no doubt, capitulate.
Dav. Ha! think you so? I never can believe it.
Kent. The hardest article of all is now
Adjusted and acceded to by France;
The Duke of Anjou is content to hold
His holy worship in a private chapel;
And openly he promises to honor
And to protect the realm's established faith.
Had ye but heard the people's joyful shouts
Where'er the tidings spread, for it has been
The country's constant fear the queen might die

Without immediate issue of her body;
And England bear again the Romish chains
If Mary Stuart should ascend the throne.

DAV. This fear appears superfluous; she goes
Into the bridal chamber; Mary Stuart
Enters the gates of death.

KENT. The queen approaches.

SCENE II.

Enter ELIZABETH, *led in by* LEICESTER, COUNT AUBESPINE, BELLIEVRE, LORDS SHREWSBURY *and* BURLEIGH, *with other French and English gentlemen.*

ELIZABETH (*to* AUBESPINE).
Count, I am sorry for these noblemen
Whose gallant zeal hath brought them over sea
To visit these our shores, that they, with us,
Must miss the splendor of St. Germain's court.
Such pompous festivals of godlike state
I cannot furnish as the royal court
Of France. A sober and contented people,
Which crowd around me with a thousand blessings
Whene'er in public I present myself:
This is the spectacle which I can show,
And not without some pride, to foreign eyes.
The splendor of the noble dames who bloom
In Catherine's beauteous garden would, I know,
Eclipse myself, and my more modest merits.

AUB. The court of England has one lady only
To show the wondering foreigner; but all
That charms our hearts in the accomplished sex
Is seen united in her single person.

BEL. Great majesty of England, suffer us
To take our leave, and to our royal master,
The Duke of Anjou, bring the happy news.
The hot impatience of his heart would not
Permit him to remain at Paris; he
At Amiens awaits the joyful tidings;
And thence to Calais reach his posts to bring
With winged swiftness to his tranced ear

The sweet consent which, still we humbly hope,
Your royal lips will graciously pronounce.

ELIZ. Press me no further now, Count Bellievre.
It is not now a time, I must repeat,
To kindle here the joyful marriage torch.
The heavens lower black and heavy o'er this land;
And weeds of mourning would become me better
Than the magnificence of bridal robes.
A fatal blow is aimed against my heart;
A blow which threatens to oppress my house.

BEL. We only ask your majesty to promise
Your royal hand when brighter days shall come.

ELIZ. Monarchs are but the slaves of their condition;
They dare not hear the dictates of their hearts;
My wish was ever to remain unmarried,
And I had placed my greatest pride in this,
That men hereafter on my tomb might read,
"Here rests the virgin queen." But my good subjects
Are not content that this should be: they think,
E'en now they often think upon the time
When I shall be no more. 'Tis not enough
That blessings now are showered upon this land;
They ask a sacrifice for future welfare,
And I must offer up my liberty,
My virgin liberty, my greatest good,
To satisfy my people. Thus they'd force
A lord and master on me. 'Tis by this
I see that I am nothing but a woman
In their regard; and yet mtehought that I
Had governed like a man, and like a king.
Well wot I that it is not serving God
To quit the laws of nature; and that those
Who here have ruled before me merit praise,
That they have oped the cloister gates, and given
Thousands of victims of ill-taught devotion
Back to the duties of humanity.
But yet a queen who hath not spent her days
In fruitless, idle contemplation; who,
Without murmur, indefatigably
Performs the hardest of all duties; she
Should be exempted from that natural law

Which doth ordain one half of human kind
Shall ever be subservient to the other.

AUB. Great queen, you have upon your throne done honor
To every virtue; nothing now remains
But to the sex, whose greatest boast you are
To be the leading star, and give the great
Example of its most consistent duties.
'Tis true, the man exists not who deserves
That you to him should sacrifice your freedom;
Yet if a hero's soul, descent, and rank,
And manly beauty can make mortal man
Deserving of this honor ——

ELIZABETH. Without doubt,
My lord ambassador, a marriage union
With France's royal son would do me honor;
Yes, I acknowledge it without disguise,
If it must be, if I cannot prevent it,
If I must yield unto my people's prayers,
And much I fear they will o'erpower me,
I do not know in Europe any prince
To whom with less reluctance I would yield
My greatest treasure, my dear liberty.
Let this confession satisfy your master.

BEL. It gives the fairest hope, and yet it gives
Nothing but hope; my master wishes more.

ELIZ. What wishes he?

[*She takes a ring from her finger, and though fully examines it.*

In this a queen has not
One privilege above all other women.
This common token marks one common duty,
One common servitude; the ring denotes
Marriage, and 'tis of rings a chain is formed.
Convey this present to his highness; 'tis
As yet no chain, it binds me not as yet,
But out of it may grow a link to bind me.

BELLIEVRE (*kneeling*).
This present, in his name, upon my knees,
I do receive, great queen, and press the kiss
Of homage on the hand of her who is
Henceforth my princess.

ABETH (*to the* EARL OF LEICESTER, *whom she, during the last speeches, had continually regarded*).
By your leave, my lord.
he takes the blue ribbon from his neck, and invests Bellievre with it.*
nvest his highness with this ornament,
As I invest you with it, and receive you
nto the duties of my gallant order.
And, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*" Thus perish
All jealousy between our several realms,
And let the bond of confidence unite
Henceforth, the crowns of Britain and of France.
Most sovereign queen, this is a day of joy;
Oh that it could be so for all, and no
Afflicted heart within this island mourn.
See! mercy beams upon thy radiant brow;
Let the reflection of its cheering light
Fall on a wretched princess, who concerns
Britain and France alike.
ZABETH. No further, count!
Let us not mix two inconsistent things;
If France be truly anxious for my hand,
It must partake my interests, and renounce
Alliance with my foes.
ESPINE. In thine own eyes
Would she not seem to act unworthily,
f in this joyous treaty she forgot
of her king;
This hapless queen, the widow
In whose behalf her honor and her faith
Are bound to plead for grace.
ZABETH. Thus urged, I know
To rate this intercession at its worth;
France has discharged her duties as a friend,
I will fulfil my own as England's queen.
She bows to the French ambassadors, who, with the other gentlemen, retire respectfully.

* Till the time of Charles the First, the Knights of the Garter wore the ribbon with the George about their necks, as they still do the collars, on st days.- TRANSLATOR.

Scene III.

Enter Burleigh, Leicester, *and* Talbot. *The* Qu… *takes her seat.*

Bur. Illustrious sovereign, thou crown'st to-day
The fervent wishes of thy people; now
We can rejoice in the propitious days
Which thou bestowest upon us; and we look
No more with fear and trembling towards the tin…
Which, charged with storms, futurity presented.
Now, but one only care disturbs this land;
It is a sacrifice which every voice
Demands; Oh! grant but this and England's pe…
Will be established now and evermore.

Eliz. What wish they still, my lord? Speak.

Burleigh. They dem…
The Stuart's head. If to thy people thou
Wouldst now secure the precious boon of freedo…
And the fair light of truth so dearly won,
Then she must die; if we are not to live
In endless terror for thy precious life
The enemy must fall; for well thou know'st
That all thy Britons are not true alike;
Romish idolatry has still its friends
In secret, in this island, who foment
The hatred of our enemies. Their hearts
All turn toward this Stu… are leagued
With the two pl… art, they …
Th… plotting brothers of Lorrain,
The foes inveterate of thy house and name.
'Gainst thee this raging faction hath declared
A war of desolation, which they wage
With the deceitful instruments of hell.
At Rheims, the cardinal archbishop's see,
There is the arsenal from which they dart
These lightnings; there the school of regicide;
Thence, in a thousand shapes disguised, are sent
Their secret missionaries to this isle;
Their bold and daring zealots; for from thence
Have we not seen the third assassin come?
And inexhausted is the direful breed
Of secret enemies in this abyss.

While in her castle sits at Fotheringay,
The *Até** of this everlasting war,
Who, with the torch of love, spreads flames around;
For her who sheds delusive hopes on all,
Youth dedicates itself to certain death;
To set her free is the pretence — the aim
Is to establish her upon the throne.
For this accursed House of Guise denies
Thy sacred right; and in their mouths thou art
A robber of the throne, whom chance has crowned.
By them this thoughtless woman was deluded,
Proudly to style herself the Queen of England;
No peace can be with her, and with her house;
[Their hatred is too bloody, and their crimes
Too great;] thou must resolve to strike, or suffer —
Her life is death to thee, her death thy life.

ELIZ. My lord, you bear a melancholy office;
I know the purity which guides your zeal,
The solid wisdom which informs your speech;
(And yet I hate this wisdom, when it calls
For blood, I hate it in my inmost soul.
Think of a milder counsel — Good my Lord
Of Shrewsbury, we crave your judgment here.

TAL. [Desire you but to know, most gracious queen,
What is for your advantage, I can add
Nothing to what my lord-high-treasurer
Has urged; then, for your welfare, let the sentence
Be now confirmed — this much is proved already:
There is no surer method to avert
The danger from your head and from the state.
Should you in this reject our true advice,

* The picture of Até, the goddess of mischief, we are acquainted with from Homer, Il. v. 91. 130. I. 501. She is a daughter of Jupiter, and eager to prejudice every one, even the immortal gods. She counteracted Jupiter himself, on which account he seized her by her beautiful hair, and hurled her from heaven to the earth, where she now, striding over the heads of men, excites them to evil in order to involve them in calamity.—HERDER.

Shakspeare has, in Julius Cæsar, made a fine use of this image:—

"And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Até by his side, come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,
Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war."

I need not point out to the reader the beautiful propriety of introducing the evil spirit on this occasion.—TRANSLATOR.

You can dismiss your council. We are placed
Here as your counsellors, but to consult
The welfare of this land, and with our knowledge
And our experience we are bound to serve you!
But in what's good and just, most gracious queen,
You have no need of counsellors, your conscience
Knows it full well, and it is written there.
Nay, it were overstepping our commission
If we attempted to instruct you in it.

ELIZ. Yet speak, my worthy Lord of Shrewsbury,
'Tis not our understanding fails alone,
Our heart too feels it wants some sage advice.]

TAL. Well did you praise the upright zeal which fires
Lord Burleigh's loyal breast; my bosom, too,
Although my tongue be not so eloquent,
Beats with no weaker, no less faithful pulse.
Long may you live, my queen, to be the joy
Of your delighted people, to prolong
Peace and its envied blessings in this realm.
Ne'er hath this isle beheld such happy days
Since it was governed by its native kings.
Oh, let it never buy its happiness
With its good name; at least, may Talbot's eyes
Be closed in death e'er this shall come to pass.

ELIZ. Forbid it, heaven, that our good name be stained!

TAL. Then must you find some other way than this
To save thy kingdom, for the sentence passed
Of death against the Stuart is unjust.
You cannot upon her pronounce a sentence
Who is not subject to you.

ELIZABETH. Then, it seems,
My council and my parliament have erred;
Each bench of justice in the land is wrong,
Which did with one accord admit this right.

TALBOT (*after a pause*).
The proof of justice lies not in the voice
Of numbers; England's not the world, nor is
Thy parliament the focus, which collects
The vast opinion of the human race.
This present England is no more the future
Than 'tis the past; as inclination changes,

Thus ever ebbs and flows the unstable tide
Of public judgment. Say not, then, that thou
Must act as stern necessity compels,
That thou must yield to the importunate
Petitions of thy people; every hour
Thou canst experience that thy will is free.
Make trial, and declare thou hatest blood,
And that thou wilt protect thy sister's life;
Show those who wish to give thee other counsels,
That here thy royal anger is not feigned,
And thou shalt see how stern necessity
Can vanish, and what once was titled justice
Into injustice be converted: thou
Thyself must pass the sentence, thou alone:
Trust not to this unsteady, trembling reed,
But hear the gracious dictates of thy heart.
God hath not planted rigor in the frame
Of woman; and the founders of this realm,
Who to the female hand have not denied
The reins of government, intend by this
To show that mercy, not severity,
Is the best virtue to adorn a crown.

ELIZ. Lord Shrewsbury is a fervent advocate
For mine and England's enemy; I must
Prefer those counsellors who wish my welfare.

TAL. Her advocates have an invidious task!
None will, by speaking in her favor, dare
To meet thy anger: suffer, then, an old
And faithful counsellor (whom naught on earth
Can tempt on the grave's brink) to exercise
The pious duty of humanity.
It never shall be said that, in thy council,
Passion and interest could find a tongue,
While mercy's pleading voice alone was mute,
All circumstances have conspired against her;
Thou ne'er hast seen her face, and nothing speaks
Within thy breast for one that's stranger to thee.
I do not take the part of her misdeeds;
They say 'twas she who planned her husband's murder:
'Tis true that she espoused his murderer.

A grievous crime, no doubt; bu
In darksome days of trouble and t then it happened
In the stern agony of civil war, l dismay,
When she, a woman, helpless an
By a rude crowd of rebel vassals, l hemmed in
Protection in a powerful chieftai sought
God knows what arts were used t 's arms.
For woman is a weak and fragile o overcome her!

ELIZ. Woman's not weak; there are thing.
Among the sex; and, in my prese heroic souls
I do forbid to speak of woman's nce, sir,

TAL. Misfortune was for thee a rigid weaknes.
Thou wast not stationed on the l school;
Of life; thou sawest no throne, sunny side
The grave was gaping for thee rom far, before thee;
At Woodstock, and in Lon at thy feet.
'Twas there the gracio don's gloomy tower,
Taught thee to k us father of this land
No flatter now thy duty, by misfortune.
er sought thee there: there learned thy soul,
Far from the noisy world and its distractions,
To commune with itself, to think apart,
And estimate the real goods of life.
No God protected this poor sufferer:
Transplanted in her early youth to France,
The court of levity and thoughtless joys,
There, in the round of constant dissipation,
She never heard the earnest voice of truth;
She was deluded by the glare of vice,
And driven onward by the stream of ruin.
Hers was the vain possession of a face,
And she outshone all others of her sex
As far in beauty, as in noble birth.

ELIZ. Collect yourself, my Lord of Shrewsbury;
Bethink you we are met in solemn council.
Those charms must surely be without compare,
Which can engender, in an elder's blood,
Such fire. My Lord of Leicester, you alone
Are silent; does the subject which has made
Him eloquent, deprive you of your speech?

LEIC. Amazement ties my tongue, my queen, to think

That they should fill thy soul with such alarms,
And that the idle tales, which, in the streets
Of London, terrify the people's ears,
Should reach the enlightened circle of thy council,
And gravely occupy our statesmen's minds.
Astonishment possesses me, I own,
To think this lackland Queen of Scotland, she
Who could not save her own poor throne, the jest
Of her own vassals, and her country's refuse,
[Who in her fairest days of freedom, was
But thy despised puppet,] should become
At once thy terror when a prisoner.
What, in Heaven's name, can make her formidable?
That she lays claim to England? that the Guises
Will not acknowledge thee as queen? [Did then
Thy people's loyal fealty await
These Guises' approbation?] Can these Guises,
With their objections, ever shake the right
Which birth hath given thee; which, with one consent,
The votes of parliament have ratified?
And is not she, by Henry's will, passed o'er
In silence? Is it probable that England,
As yet so blessed in the new light's enjoyment,
Should throw itself into this papist's arms?
From thee, the sovereign it adores, desert
To Darnley's murderess? What will they then,
These restless men, who even in thy lifetime
Torment thee with a successor; who cannot
Dispose of thee in marriage soon enough
To rescue church and state from fancied peril?
Stand'st thou not blooming there in youthful prime
While each step leads her towards the expecting tomb?
By Heavens, I hope thou wilt full many a year
Walk o'er the Stuart's grave, and ne'er become
Thyself the instrument of her sad end.

BUR. Lord Leicester hath not always held this tone.

LEIC. 'Tis true, I in the court of justice gave
My verdict for her death; here, in the council,
I may consistently speak otherwise:

Here, right is not the question, but advantage.
Is this a time to fear her power, when France,
Her only succor, has abandoned her?
When thou preparest with thy hand to bless
The royal son of France, when the fair hope
Of a new, glorious stem of sovereigns
Begins again to blossom in this land?
Why hasten then her death? She's dead already.
Contempt and scorn are death to her; take heed
Lest ill-timed pity call her into life.
'Tis therefore my advice to leave the sentence,
By which her life is forfeit, in full force.
Let her live on; but let her live beneath
The headsman's axe, and, from the very hour
One arm is lifted for her, let it fall.

ELIZABETH (*rises*).

My lords, I now have heard your several thoughts,
And give my ardent thanks for this your zeal.
With God's assistance, who the hearts of kings
Illumines, I will weigh your arguments,
And choose what best my judgment shall approve.
[*To* BURLEIGH.
[Lord Burleigh's honest fears, I know it well,
Are but the offspring of his faithful care;
But yet, Lord Leicester has most truly said,
There is no need of haste; our enemy
Hath lost already her most dangerous sting—
The mighty arm of France: the fear that she
Might quickly be the victim of their zeal
Will curb the blind impatience of her friends.]

SCENE IV.

Enter SIR AMIAS PAULET *and* MORTIMER.

ELIZ. There's Sir Amias Paulet; noble sir,
What tidings bring you?

PAUL. Gracious sovereign,
My nephew, who but lately is returned
From foreign travel, kneels before thy feet,
And offers thee his first and earliest homage,

Grant him thy royal grace, and let him grow
And flourish in the sunshine of thy favor.

MORTIMER (*kneeling on one knee*).
Long live my royal mistress! Happiness
And glory from a crown to grace her brows!

ELIZ. Arise, sir knight; and welcome here in England;
You've made, I hear, the tour, have been in France
And Rome, and tarried, too, some time at Rheims:
Tell me what plots our enemies are hatching?

MORT. May God confound them all! And may the darts
Which they shall aim against my sovereign,
Recoiling, strike their own perfidious breasts!

ELIZ. Did you see Morgan, and the wily Bishop
Of Ross?

MORT. I saw, my queen, all Scottish exiles
Who forge at Rheims their plots against this realm.
I stole into their confidence in hopes
To learn some hint of their conspiracies.

PAUL. Private despatches they intrusted to him,
In cyphers, for the Queen of Scots, which he,
With loyal hand, hath given up to us.

ELIZ. Say, what are then their latest plans of treason?

MORT. It struck them all as 'twere a thunderbolt,
That France should leave them, and with England close
This firm alliance; now they turn their hopes
Towards Spain ——

ELIZABETH. This, Walsingham hath written us.

MORT. Besides, a bull, which from the Vatican
Pope Sixtus lately levelled at thy throne,
Arrived at Rheims, as I was leaving it;
With the next ship we may expect it here.

LEIC. England no more is frightened by such arms.

BUR. They're always dangerous in bigots' hands.

ELIZABETH (*looking steadfastly at* MORTIMER).
Your enemies have said that you frequented
The schools at Rheims, and have abjured your faith.

MORT. So I pretended, that I must confess;
Such was my anxious wish to serve my queen.

ELIZABETH (*to* PAULET, *who presents papers to her*).
What have you there?

PAULET. 'Tis from the Queen of Scots.
'Tis a petition, and to thee addressed.
BURLEIGH (*hastily catching at it*).
Give me the paper.
PAULET (*giving it to the* QUEEN).
By your leave, my lord
High-treasurer; the lady ordered me
To bring it to her majesty's own hands.
She says I am her enemy; I am
The enemy of her offences only,
And that which is consistent with my duty
I will, and readily, oblige her in.
[*The* QUEEN *takes the letter: as she reads it* MORTIMER *and* LEICESTER *speak some words in private.*
BURLEIGH (*to* PAULET).
What may the purport of the letter be?
Idle complaints, from which one ought to screen
The queen's too tender heart.
PAULET. What it contains
She did not hide from me; she asks a boon;
She begs to be admitted to the grace
Of speaking with the queen.
BURLEIGH. It cannot be.
TAL. Why not? Her supplication's not unjust.
BUR. For her, the base encourager of murder;
Her, who hath thirsted for our sovereign's blood,
The privilege to see the royal presence
Is forfeited: a faithful counsellor
Can never give this treacherous advice.
TAL. And if the queen is gracious, sir, are you
The man to hinder pity's soft emotions?
BUR. She is condemned to death; her head is laid
Beneath the axe, and it would ill become
The queen to see a death-devoted head.
The sentence cannot have its execution
If the queen's majesty approaches her,
For pardon still attends the royal presence,
As sickness flies the health-dispensing hand.
ELIZABETH (*having read the letter, dries her tears*).
Oh, what is man! What is the bliss of earth!
To what extremities is she reduced

Who with such proud and splendid hopes began!
Who, called to sit on the most ancient throne
Of Christendom, misled by vain ambition,
Hoped with a triple crown to deck her brows!
How is her language altered, since the time
When she assumed the arms of England's crown,
And by the flatterers of her court was styled
Sole monarch of the two Britannic isles!
Forgive me, lords, my heart is cleft in twain,
Anguish possesses me, and my soul bleeds
To think that earthly goods are so unstable,
And that the dreadful fate which rules mankind
Should threaten mine own house, and scowl so near me.

TAL. Oh, queen! the God of mercy hath informed
Your heart; Oh! hearken to this heavenly guidance,
Most grievously, indeed, hath she atoned
Her grievous crime, and it is time that now,
At last, her heavy penance have an end.
Stretch forth your hand to raise this abject queen,
And, like the luminous vision of an angel,
Descend into her gaol's sepulchral night.

BUR. Be steadfast, mighty queen; let no emotion
Of seeming laudable humanity
Mislead thee; take not from thyself the power
Of acting as necessity commands.
Thou canst not pardon her, thou canst not save her:
Then heap not on thyself the odious blame,
That thou, with cruel and contemptuous triumph,
Didst glut thyself with gazing on thy victim.

LEIC. Let us, my lords, remain within our bounds;
The queen is wise, and doth not need our counsels
To lead her to the most becoming choice.
This meeting of the queens hath naught in common
With the proceedings of the court of justice.
The law of England, not the monarch's will,
Condemns the Queen of Scotland, and 'twere worthy
Of the great soul of Queen Elizabeth,
To follow the soft dictates of her heart,
Though justice swerves not from its rigid path.

ELIZ. Retire, my lords. We shall, perhaps, find means

To reconcile the tender claims of pity
With what necessity imposes on us.
And now retire.

[*The* LORDS *retire; she calls* SIR EDWARD MORTIMER *back.*

Sir Edward Mortimer!

SCENE V.

ELIZABETH, MORTIMER.

ELIZABETH (*having measured him for some time with her eyes in silence*).

You've shown a spirit of adventurous courage
And self-possession, far beyond your years.
He who has timely learnt to play so well
The difficult dissembler's needful task
Becomes a perfect man before his time,
And shortens his probationary years.
Fate calls you to a lofty scene of action;
I prophesy it, and can, happily
For you, fulfil, myself, my own prediction.

MORT. Illustrious mistress, what I am, and all
I can accomplish, is devoted to you.

ELIZ. You've made acquaintance with the foes of England.
Their hate against me is implacable;
Their fell designs are inexhaustible.
As yet, indeed, Almighty Providence
Hath shielded me; but on my brows the crown
Forever trembles, while she lives who fans
Their bigot-zeal, and animates their hopes.

MORT. She lives no more, as soon as you command it.

ELIZ. Oh, sir! I thought I saw my labors end,
And I am come no further than at first,
I wished to let the laws of England act,
And keep my own hands pure from blood's defilement.
The sentence is pronounced — what gain I by it?
It must be executed, Mortimer,
And I must authorize the execution.

The blame will ever light on me, I must
Avow it, nor can save appearances.
That is the worst ——

MORTIMER. But can appearances
Disturb your conscience where the cause is just?

ELIZ. You are unpractised in the world, sir knight;
What we appear, is subject to the judgment
Of all mankind, and what we are, of no man.
No one will be convinced that I am right:
I must take care that my connivance in
Her death be wrapped in everlasting doubt.
In deeds of such uncertain double visage
Safety lies only in obscurity.
Those measures are the worst that stand avowed;
What's not abandoned, is not wholly lost.

MORTIMER (*seeking to learn her meaning*).
Then it perhaps were best ——

ELIZABETH (*quick*). Ay, surely 'twere
The best; Oh, sir, my better angel speaks
Through you; — go on then, worthy sir, conclude
You are in earnest, you examine deep,
Have quite a different spirit from your uncle.

MORTIMER (*surprised*).
Have you imparted then your wishes to him?

ELIZ. I am sorry that I have.

MORTIMER. Excuse his age,
The old man is grown scrupulous; such bold
Adventures ask the enterprising heart
Of youth ——

ELIZABETH. And may I venture then on you ——

MORT. My hand I'll lend thee; save then as thou canst
Thy reputation ——

ELIZABETH. Yes, sir; if you could
But waken me some morning with this news
"Maria Stuart, your bloodthirsty foe,
Breathed yesternight her last" ——

MORTIMER. Depend on me.

ELIZ. When shall my head lie calmly down to sleep?

MORT. The next new moon will terminate thy fears.

ELIZ. And be the selfsame happy day the dawn
Of your preferment — so God speed you, sir;

And be not hurt, if, chance, my thankfulness
Should wear the mask of darkness. Silence is
The happy suitor's god. The closest bonds,
The dearest, are the works of secrecy. [*Exit.*

Scene VI.

Mortimer (*alone*).

Go, false, deceitful queen! As thou deludest
The world, e'en so I cozen thee; 'tis right,
Thus to betray thee; 'tis a worthy deed.
Look I then like a murderer? Hast thou read
Upon my brow such base dexterity?
Trust only to my arm, and keep thine own
Concealed — assume the pious outward show
Of mercy 'fore the world, while reckoning
In secret on my murderous aid; and thus
By gaining time we shall insure her rescue.
Thou wilt exalt me! — show'st me from afar
The costly recompense: but even were
Thyself the prize, and all thy woman's favor,
What art thou, poor one, and what canst thou proffer?
I scorn ambition's avaricious strife,
With her alone is all the charm of life,
O'er her, in rounds of endless glory, hover
Spirits with grace, and youth eternal blessed,
Celestial joy is throned upon her breast.
Thou hast but earthly, mortal goods to offer —
That sovereign good, for which all else be slighted,
When heart in heart, delighting and delighted;
Together flow in sweet forgetfulness; —
Ne'er didst thou woman's fairest crown possess,
Ne'er hast thou with thy hand a lover's heart requited.
I must attend Lord Leicester, and deliver
Her letter to him — 'tis a hateful charge —
I have no confidence in this court puppet —
I can effect her rescue, I alone;
Be danger, honor, and the prize my own.
[*As he is going,* Paulet *meets him.*

MORTIMER (*producing suddenly the letter*).
Here is a letter from the Queen of Scotland.
LEICESTER (*alarmed, catches hastily at the letter*).
Speak softly, sir! what see I? Oh, it is
Her picture!
[*Kisses and examines it with speechless joy — a pause.*
MORTIMER (*who has watched him closely the whole time*).
Now, my lord, I can believe you.
LEICESTER (*having hastily run through the letter*).
You know the purport of this letter, sir.
MORT. Not I.
LEICESTER. Indeed! She surely hath informed you.
MORT. Nothing hath she informed me of. She said
You would explain this riddle to me — 'tis
To me a riddle, that the Earl of Leicester,
The far-famed favorite of Elizabeth,
The open, bitter enemy of Mary,
And one of those who spoke her mortal sentence,
Should be the man from whom the queen expects
Deliverance from her woes; and yet it must be;
Your eyes express too plainly what your heart
Feels for the hapless lady.
LEICESTER. Tell me, sir,
First, how it comes that you should take so warm
An interest in her fate; and what it was
Gained you her confidence?
MORTIMER. My lord, I can,
And in few words, explain this mystery.
I lately have at Rome abjured my creed,
And stand in correspondence with the Guises.
A letter from the cardinal archbishop
Was my credential with the Queen of Scots.
LEIC. I am acquainted, sir, with your conversion;
'Twas that which waked my confidence towards you.
[Each remnant of distrust be henceforth banished;]
Your hand, sir, pardon me these idle doubts,
I cannot use too much precaution here.
Knowing how Walsingham and Burleigh hate me,
And, watching me, in secret spread their snares;
You might have been their instrument, their creature
To lure me to their toils.

MORTIMER. How poor a part
So great a nobleman is forced to play
At court! My lord, I pity you.
LEICESTER. With joy
I rest upon the faithful breast of friendship,
Where I can ease me of this long constraint.
You seem surprised, sir, that my heart is turned
So suddenly towards the captive queen.
In truth, I never hated her; the times
Have forced me to be her enemy.
She was, as you well know, my destined bride,
Long since, ere she bestowed her hand on Darnley,
While yet the beams of glory round her smiled,
Coldly I then refused the proffered boon.
Now in confinement, at the gates of death,
I claim her at the hazard of my life.
MORT. True magnanimity, my lord.
LEICESTER. The state
Of circumstances since that time is changed.
Ambition made me all insensible
To youth and beauty. Mary's hand I held
Too insignificant for me; I hoped
To be the husband of the Queen of England.
MORT. It is well known she gave you preference
Before all others.
LEICESTER. So, indeed, it seemed.
Now, after ten lost years of tedious courtship
And hateful self-constraint — oh, sir, my heart
Must ease itself of this long agony.
They call me happy! Did they only know
What the chains are, for which they envy me!
When I had sacrificed ten bitter years
To the proud idol of her vanity;
Submitted with a slave's humility
To every change of her despotic fancies
The plaything of each little wayward whim.
At times by seeming tenderness caressed,
As oft repulsed with proud and cold disdain;
Alike tormented by her grace and rigor:
Watched like a prisoner by the Argus eyes
Of jealousy; examined like a schoolboy,

And railed at like a servant. Oh, no tongue
Can paint this hell.

MORTIMER. My lord, I feel for you.

LEIC. To lose, and at the very goal, the prize!
Another comes to rob me of the fruits
Of my so anxious wooing. I must lose
To her young blooming husband all those rights
Of which I was so long in full possession;
And I must from the stage descend, where I
So long have played the most distinguished part.
'Tis not her hand alone this envious stranger
Threatens, he'd rob me of her favor too;
She is a woman, and he formed to please.

MORT. He is the son of Catherine. He has learn
In a good school the arts of flattery.

LEIC. Thus fall my hopes; I strove to seize a plank
To bear me in this shipwreck of my fortunes,
And my eye turned itself towards the hope
Of former days once more; then Mary's image
Within me was renewed, and youth and beauty
Once more asserted all their former rights.
No more 'twas cold ambition; 'twas my heart
Which now compared, and with regret I felt
The value of the jewel I had lost.
With horror I beheld her in the depths.
Of misery, cast down by my transgression;
Then waked the hope in me that I might still
Deliver and possess her; I contrived
To send her, through a faithful hand, the news
Of my conversion to her interests;
And in this letter which you brought me, she
Assures me that she pardons me, and offers
Herself as guerdon if I rescue her.

MORT. But you attempted nothing for her rescue.
You let her be condemned without a word:
You gave, yourself, your verdict for her death;
A miracle must happen, and the light
Of truth must move me, *me*, her keeper's nephew,
And heaven must in the Vatican at Rome
Prepare for her an unexpected succour,
Else had she never found the way to you.

LEIC. Oh, sir, it has tormented me enough!
About this time it was that they removed her
From Talbot's castle, and delivered her
Up to your uncle's stricter custody.
Each way to her was shut. I was obliged
Before the world to persecute her still;
But do not think that I would patiently
Have seen her led to death. No, sir; I hoped,
And still I hope, to ward off all extremes,
Till I can find some certain means to save her.
MORT. These are already found: my Lord of Leicester;
Your generous confidence in me deserves
A like return. I will deliver her.
That is my object here; my dispositions
Are made already, and your powerful aid
Assures us of success in our attempt.
LEIC. What say you? You alarm me! How? You would ——
MORT. I'll open forcibly her prison-gates;
I have confederates, and all is ready.
LEIC. You have confederates, accomplices?
Alas! In what rash enterprise would you
Engage me? And these friends, know they my secret?
MORT. Fear not; our plan was laid without your help,
Without your help it would have been accomplished,
Had she not signified her resolution
To owe her liberty to you alone.
LEIC. And can you, then, with certainty assure me
That in your plot my name has not been mentioned?
MORT. You may depend upon it. How, my lord,
So scrupulous when help is offered you?
You wish to rescue Mary, and possess her;
You find confederates; sudden, unexpected,
The readiest means fall, as it were from Heaven,
Yet you show more perplexity than joy.
LEIC. We must avoid all violence; it is
Too dangerous an enterprise.
MORTIMER. Delay
Is also dangerous.
LEICESTER. I tell you, sir,
'Tis not to be attempted ——

MORTIMER. My lord,
Too hazardous for you, who would possess her;
But we, who only wish to rescue her,
We are more bold.
LEICESTER. Young man, you are too hasty
In such a thorny, dangerous attempt.
MORT. And you too scrupulous in honor's cause.
LEIC. I see the trammels that are spread around us.
MORT. And I feel courage to break through them all.
LEIC. Foolhardiness and madness, is this courage?
MORT. This prudence is not bravery, my lord.
LEIC. You surely wish to end like Babington.
MORT. You not to imitate great Norfolk's virtue.
LEIC. Norfolk ne'er won the bride he wooed so fondly.
MORT. But yet he proved how truly he deserved her.
LEIC. If we are ruined, she must fall with us.
MORT. If we risk nothing, she will ne'er be rescued.
LEIC. You will not weigh the matter, will not hear;
With blind and hasty rashness you destroy
The plans which I so happily had framed.
MORT. And what were then the plans which you had framed?
What have you done then to deliver her?
And how, if I were miscreant enough
To murder her, as was proposed to me
This moment by Elizabeth, and which
She looks upon as certain; only name
The measures you have taken to protect her?
LEIC. Did the queen give you, then, this bloody order?
MORT. She was deceived in me, as Mary is
In you.
LEICESTER. And have you promised it? Say, have you?
MORT. That she might not engage another's hand,
I offered mine.
LEICESTER. Well done, sir; that was right;
This gives us leisure, for she rests secure
Upon your bloody service, and the sentence
Is unfulfilled the while, and we gain time.
MORTIMER (*angrily*).
No, we are losing time.
LEICESTER. The queen depends

On you, and will the readier make a show
Of mercy; and I may prevail on her
To give an audience to her adversary;
And by this stratagem we tie her hands:
Yes! I will make the attempt, strain every nerve.

MORT. And what is gained by this? When she discovers
That I am cheating her, that Mary lives;
Are we not where we were? She never will
Be free; the mildest doom which can await her
At best is but perpetual confinement.
A daring deed must one day end the matter;
Why will you not with such a deed begin?
The power is in your hands, would you but rouse
The might of your dependents round about
Your many castles, 'twere an host; and still
Has Mary many secret friends. The Howards
And Percies' noble houses, though their chiefs
Be fallen, are rich in heroes; they but wait
For the example of some potent lord.
Away with feigning — act an open part,
And, like a loyal knight, protect your fair;
Fight a good fight for her! You know you are
Lord of the person of the Queen of England,
Whene'er you will: invite her to your castle,
Oft hath she thither followed you — then show
That you're a man; then speak as master; keep her
Confined till she release the Queen of Scots.

LEIC. I am astonished — I am terrified!
Where would your giddy madness hurry you?
Are you acquainted with this country? Know you
The deeps and shallows of this court? With what
A potent spell this female sceptre binds
And rules men's spirits round her? 'Tis in vain
You seek the heroic energy which once
Was active in this land! it is subdued,
A woman holds it under lock and key,
And every spring of courage is relaxed.
Follow my counsel — venture nothing rashly.
Some one approaches — go ——

MORTIMER. And Mary hopes —
Shall I return to her with empty comfort?
LEIC. Bear her my vows of everlasting love.
MORT. Bear them yourself! I offered my assistance
As her deliverer, not your messenger. [*Exit.*

SCENE IX.

ELIZABETH, LEICESTER.

ELIZ. Say, who was here? I heard the sound of voices
LEICESTER (*turning quickly and perplexed round on hearing the* QUEEN).
It was young Mortimer ——
ELIZABETH. How now, my lord:
Why so confused?
LEICESTER (*collecting himself*).
Your presence is the cause.
Ne'er did I see thy beauty so resplendent,
My sight is dazzled by thy heavenly charms.
Oh!
ELIZABETH. Whence this sigh?
LEICESTER. Have I no reason, then,
To sigh? When I behold you in your glory,
I feel anew, with pain unspeakable,
The loss which threatens me.
ELIZABETH. What loss, my lord?
LEIC. Your heart; your own inestimable self:
Soon will you feel yourself within the arms
Of your young ardent husband, highly blessed;
He will possess your heart without a rival.
He is of royal blood, that am not I.
Yet, spite of all the world can say, there lives not
One on this globe who with such fervent zeal
Adores you as the man who loses you.
Anjou hath never seen you, can but love
Your glory and the splendor of your reign;
But I love you, and were you born of all
The peasant maids the poorest, I the first
Of kings, I would descend to your condition,
And lay my crown and sceptre at your feet!
ELIZ. Oh, pity me, my Dudley; do not blame me;

I cannot ask my heart. Oh, that had chosen
Far otherwise! Ah, how I envy others
Who can exalt the object of their love!
But I am not so blest: 'tis not my fortune
To place upon the brows of him, the dearest
Of men to me, the royal crown of England.
The Queen of Scotland was allowed to make
Her hand the token of her inclination;
She hath had every freedom, and hath drunk,
Even to the very dregs, the cup of joy.

LEIC. And now she drinks the bitter cup of sorrow.

ELIZ. She never did respect the world's opinion;
Life was to her a sport; she never courted
The yoke to which I bowed my willing neck.
And yet, methinks, I had as just a claim
As she to please myself and taste the joys
Of life: but I preferred the rigid duties
Which royalty imposed on me; yet she,
She was the favorite of all the men
Because she only strove to be a woman;
And youth and age became alike her suitors.
Thus are the men voluptuaries all!
The willing slaves of levity and pleasure;
Value that least which claims their reverence.
And did not even Talbot, though gray-headed,
Grow young again when speaking of her charms?

LEIC. Forgive him, for he was her keeper once,
And she has fooled him with her cunning wiles.

ELIZ. And is it really true that she's so fair?
So often have I been obliged to hear
The praises of this wonder — it were well
If I could learn on what I might depend:
Pictures are flattering, and description lies;
I will trust nothing but my own conviction.
Why gaze you at me thus?

LEICESTER. I placed in thought
You and Maria Stuart side by side.
Yes! I confess I oft have felt a wish,
If it could be but secretly contrived,
To see you placed beside the Scottish queen,
Then would you feel, and not till then, the full

Enjoyment of your triumph: she deserves
To be thus humbled; she deserves to see,
With her own eyes, and envy's glance is keen,
Herself surpassed, to feel herself o'ermatched,
As much by thee in form and princely grace
As in each virtue that adorns the sex.

ELIZ. In years she has the advantage ——

LEICESTER. Has she so?
I never should have thought it. But her griefs,
Her sufferings, indeed! 'tis possible
Have brought down age upon her ere her time.
Yes, and 'twould mortify her more to see thee
As bride — she hath already turned her back
On each fair hope of life, and she would see thee
Advancing towards the open arms of joy.
See thee as bride of France's royal son,
She who hath always plumed herself so high
On her connection with the house of France,
And still depends upon its mighty aid.

ELIZABETH (*with a careless air*).
I'm teazed to grant this interview.

LEICESTER. She asks it
As a favor; grant it as a punishment.
For though you should conduct her to the block,
Yet would it less torment her than to see
Herself extinguished by your beauty's splendor.
Thus can you murder her as she hath wished
To murder you. When she beholds your beauty,
Guarded by modesty, and beaming bright,
In the clear glory of unspotted fame
(Which she with thoughtless levity discarded),
Exalted by the splendor of the crown,
And blooming now with tender bridal graces —
Then is the hour of her destruction come.
Yes — when I now behold you — you were never,
No, never were you so prepared to seal
The triumph of your beauty. As but now
You entered the apartment, I was dazzled
As by a glorious vision from on high.
Could you but now, now as you are, appear
Before her, you could find no better moment.

ELIZ. Now? no, not now; no, Leicester; this must be
Maturely weighed — I must with Burleigh —
LEICESTER. Burleigh!
To him you are but sovereign, and as such
Alone he seeks your welfare; but your rights,
Derived from womanhood, this tender point
Must be decided by your own tribunal,
Not by the statesman; yet e'en policy
Demands that you should see her, and allure
By such a generous deed the public voice.
You can hereafter act as it may please you,
To rid you of the hateful enemy.
ELIZ. But would it then become me to behold
My kinswoman in infamy and want?
They say she is not royally attended;
Would not the sight of her distress reproach me?
LEIC. You need not cross her threshold; hear my counsel:
A fortunate conjuncture favors it.
The hunt you mean to honor with your presence
Is in the neighborhood of Fotheringay;
Permission may be given to Lady Stuart
To take the air; you meet her in the park,
As if by accident; it must not seem
To have been planned, and should you not incline,
You need not speak to her.
ELIZABETH. If I am foolish,
Be yours the fault, not mine. I would not care
To-day to cross your wishes; for to-day
I've grieved you more than all my other subjects.
[*Tenderly.*
Let it then be your fancy. Leicester, hence
You see the free obsequiousness of love.
Which suffers that which it cannot approve.
[LEICESTER *prostrates himself before her, and the curtain falls.*

ACT III.

Scene I.

In a park. In the foreground trees; in the background a distant prospect.

Mary *advances, running from behind the trees.* Hannah Kennedy *follows slowly.*

Ken. You hasten on as if endowed with wings;
I cannot follow you so swiftly; wait.

Mary. Freedom returns! Oh let me enjoy it.
Let me be childish; be thou childish with me.
Freedom invites me! Oh, let me employ it
Skimming with winged step light o'er the lea;
Have I escaped from this mansion of mourning?
Holds me no more the sad dungeon of care?
Let me, with joy and with eagerness burning,
Drink in the free, the celestial air.

Ken. Oh, my dear lady! but a very little
Is your sad gaol extended; you behold not
The wall that shuts us in; these plaited tufts
Of trees hide from your sight the hated object.

Mary. Thanks to these friendly trees, that hide from me
My prison walls, and flatter my illusion!
Happy I now may deem myself, and free;
Why wake me from my dream's so sweet confusion?
The extended vault of heaven around me lies,
Free and unfettered range my wandering eyes
O'er space's vast, immeasurable sea!
From where yon misty mountains rise on high
I can my empire's boundaries explore;
And those light clouds which, steering southwards, fly,
Seek the mild clime of France's genial shore.
Fast fleeting clouds! ye meteors that fly;
Could I but with you sail through the sky!
Tenderly greet the dear land of my youth!
Here I am captive! oppressed by my foes,
No other than you may carry my woes.
Free through the ether your pathway is seen,
Ye own not the power of this tyrant queen.

KEN. Alas! dear lady! You're beside yourself,
This long-lost, long-sought freedom makes you rave.
MARY. Yonder's a fisher returning to his home;
Poor though it be, would he lend me his wherry,
Quick to congenial shores would I ferry.
Spare is his trade, and labor's his doom;
Rich would I freight his vessel with treasure;
Such a draught should be his as he never had seen;
Wealth should he find in his nets without measure,
Would he but rescue a poor captive queen.
KEN. Fond, fruitless wishes! See you not from far
How we are followed by observing spies?
A dismal, barbarous prohibition scares
Each sympathetic being from our path.
MARY. No, gentle Hannah! Trust me, not in vain
My prison gates are opened. This small grace
Is harbinger of greater happiness.
No! I mistake not; 'tis the active hand
Of love to which I owe this kind indulgence.
I recognize in this the mighty arm
Of Leicester. They will by degrees expand
My prison; will accustom me, through small,
To greater liberty, until at last
I shall behold the face of him whose hand
Will dash my fetters off, and that forever.
KEN. Oh, my dear queen! I cannot reconcile
These contradictions. 'Twas but yesterday
That they announced your death, and all at once,
To-day, you have such liberty. Their chains
Are also loosed, as I have oft been told,
Whom everlasting liberty awaits.
[*Hunting horns at a distance.*
MARY. Hear'st thou the bugle, so blithely resounding?
Hear'st thou its echoes through wood and through plain?
Oh, might I now, on my nimble steed bounding,
Join with the jocund, the frolicsome train.
[*Hunting horns again heard.*
Again! Oh, this sad and this pleasing remembrance!
These are the sounds which, so sprightly and clear,
Oft, when with music the hounds and the horn

So cheerfully welcomed the break of the morn,
On the heaths of the Highlands delighted my ear.

Scene II.

Enter Paulet.

Paul. Well, have I acted right at last, my lady?
Do I for once, at least, deserve your thanks?
Mary. How! Do I owe this favor, sir, to you?
Paul. Why not to me? I visited the court,
And gave the queen your letter.
Mary. Did you give it?
In very truth did you deliver it?
And is this freedom which I now enjoy
The happy consequence?
Paulet (*significantly*). Nor that alone;
Prepare yourself to see a greater still.
Mary. A greater still! What do you mean by that?
Paul. You heard the bugle-horns?
Mary (*starting back with foreboding apprehension*).
You frighten me.
Paul. The queen is hunting in the neighborhood ——
Mary. What!
Paul. In a few moments she'll appear before you.
Kennedy (*hastening towards* Mary, *and about to fall*).
How fare you, dearest lady? You grow pale.
Paul. How? Is't not well? Was it not then your prayer?
'Tis granted now, before it was expected;
You who had ever such a ready speech,
Now summon all your powers of eloquence,
The important time to use them now is come.
Mary. Oh, why was I not told of this before?
Now I am not prepared for it — not now ——
What, as the greatest favor, I besought,
Seems to me now most fearful; Hannah, come,
Lead me into the house, till I collect
My spirits.
Paulet. Stay; you must await her here.
Yes! I believe you may be well alarmed
To stand before your judge.

Scene III.

Enter the Earl of Shrewsbury.

Mary. 'Tis not for that,
O God! Far other thoughts possess me now.
Oh, worthy Shrewsbury! You come as though
You were an angel sent to me from heaven.
I cannot, will not see her. Save me, save me
From the detested sight!

Shrewsbury. Your majesty,
Command yourself, and summon all your courage;
'Tis the decisive moment of your fate.

Mary. For years I've waited, and prepared myself.
For this I've studied, weighed, and written down
Each word within the tablet of my memory
That was to touch and move her to compassion.
Forgotten suddenly, effaced is all,
And nothing lives within me at this moment
But the fierce, burning feeling of my wrongs.
My heart is turned to direst hate against her;
All gentle thoughts, all sweet forgiving words,
Are gone, and round me stand with grisly mien,
The fiends of hell, and shake their snaky locks!

Shrew. Command your wild, rebellious blood; — constrain
The bitterness which fills your heart. No good
Ensues when hatred is opposed to hate.
How much soe'er the inward struggle cost
You must submit to stern necessity,
The power is in her hand, be therefore humble.

Mary. To her? I never can.

Shrewsbury. But pray, submit.
Speak with respect, with calmness! Strive to move
Her magnanimity; insist not now
Upon your rights, not now — 'tis not the season.

Mary. Ah! woe is me! I've prayed for my destruction,
And, as a curse to me, my prayer is heard.
We never should have seen each other — never!
Oh, this can never, never come to good.
Rather in love could fire and water meet,
The timid lamb embrace the roaring tiger!

I have been hurt too grievously; she hath
Too grievously oppressed me; — no atonement
Can make us friends!

SHREWSBURY. First see her, face to face:
Did I not see how she was moved at reading
Your letter? How her eyes were drowned in tears?
No — she is not unfeeling; only place
More confidence in her. It was for this
That I came on before her, to entreat you
To be collected — to admonish you ——

MARY (*seizing his hand*).
Oh, Talbot! you have ever been my friend,
Had I but stayed beneath your kindly care!
They have, indeed, misused me, Shrewsbury.

SHREW. Let all be now forgot, and only think
How to receive her with submissiveness.

MARY. Is Burleigh with her, too, my evil genius?

SHREW. No one attends her but the Earl of Leicester.

MARY. Lord Leicester?

SHREWSBURY. Fear not him; it is not he
Who wishes your destruction; — 'twas his work
That here the queen hath granted you this meeting.

MARY. Ah! well I knew it.

SHREWSBURY. What?

PAULET. The queen approaches.

[*They all draw aside;* MARY *alone remains, leaning on* KENNEDY.

SCENE IV.

The same, ELIZABETH, EARL OF LEICESTER, *and Retinue.*

ELIZABETH (*to* LEICESTER),
What seat is that, my lord?

LEICESTER. 'Tis Fotheringay.

ELIZABETH (*to* SHREWSBURY).
My lord, send back our retinue to London;
The people crowd too eager in the roads,
We'll seek a refuge in this quiet park.

[TALBOT *sends the train away. She looks steadfastly at* MARY, *as she speaks further with* PAULET.
My honest people love me overmuch.

These signs of joy are quite idolatrous.
Thus should a God be honored, not a mortal.

MARY (*who the whole time had leaned, almost fainting, on* KENNEDY, *rises now, and her eyes meet the steady, piercing look of* ELIZABETH; *she shudders and throws herself again upon* KENNEDY'S *bosom*).

O God! from out these features speaks no heart.

ELIZ. What lady's that?

[*A general, embarrassed silence.*

LEICESTER. You are at Fotheringay,
My liege!

ELIZABETH (*as if surprised, casting an angry look at* LEICESTER.)

Who hath done this, my Lord of Leicester?

LEIC. 'Tis past, my queen;—and now that heaven hath led
Your footsteps hither, be magnanimous;
And let sweet pity be triumphant now.

SHREW. Oh, royal mistress! yield to our entreaties;
Oh, cast your eyes on this unhappy one
Who stands dissolved in anguish.

[MARY *collects herself, and begins to advance towards* ELIZABETH, *stops shuddering at half way:—her action expresses the most violent internal struggle.*

ELIZABETH. How, my lords!
Which of you then announced to me a prisoner
Bowed down by woe? I see a haughty one
By no means humbled by calamity.

MARY. Well, be it so:—to this will I submit.
Farewell high thought, and pride of noble mind!
I will forget my dignity, and all
My sufferings; I will fall before her feet
Who hath reduced me to this wretchedness.

[*She turns towards the* QUEEN.

The voice of heaven decides for you, my sister.
Your happy brows are now with triumph crowned,
I bless the Power Divine which thus hath raised you.

[*She kneels*

But in your turn be merciful, my sister;
Let me not lie before you thus disgraced;
Stretch forth your hand, your royal hand, to raise
Your sister from the depths of her distress.

ELIZABETH (*stepping back*).

You are where it becomes you, Lady Stuart;
And thankfully I prize my God's protection,
Who hath not suffered me to kneel a suppliant
Thus at your feet, as you now kneel at mine.

MARY (*with increasing energy of feeling*).

Think on all earthly things, vicissitudes.
Oh! there are gods who punish haughty pride:
Respect them, honor them, the dreadful ones
Who thus before thy feet have humbled me!
Before these strangers' eyes dishonor not
Yourself in me: profane not, nor disgrace
The royal blood of Tudor. In my veins
It flows as pure a stream as in your own.
Oh, for God's pity, stand not so estranged
And inaccessible, like some tall cliff,
Which the poor shipwrecked mariner in vain
Struggles to sieze, and labors to embrace.
My all, my life, my fortune now depends
Upon the influence of my words and tears;
That I may touch your heart, oh, set mine free.
If you regard me with those icy looks
My shuddering heart contracts itself, the stream
Of tears is dried, and frigid horror chains
The words of supplication in my bosom!

ELIZABETH (*cold and severe*).

What would you say to me, my Lady Stuart?
You wished to speak with me; and I, forgetting
The queen, and all the wrongs I have sustained,
Fulfil the pious duty of the sister,
And grant the boon you wished for of my presence.
Yet I, in yielding to the generous feelings
Of magnanimity, expose myself
To rightful censure, that I stoop so low.
For well you know you would have had me murdered.

MARY. Oh! how shall I begin? Oh, how shall I
So artfully arrange my cautious words
That they may touch, yet not offend your heart?
Strengthen my words, O Heaven! and take from them
Whate'er might wound. Alas! I cannot speak

In my own cause without impeaching you,
And that most heavily, I wish not so;
You have not as you ought behaved to me:
I am a queen, like you yet you have held me
Confined in prison. As a suppliant
I came to you, yet you in me insulted
The pious use of hospitality;
Slighting in me the holy law of nations,
Immured me in a dungeon — tore from me
My friends and servants; to unseemly want
I was exposed, and hurried to the bar
Of a disgraceful, insolent tribunal.
No more of this; — in everlasting silence
Be buried all the cruelties I suffered!
See — I will throw the blame of all on fate,
'Twere not your fault, no more than it was mine.
An evil spirit rose from the abyss,
To kindle in our hearts the flame of hate,
By which our tender youth had been divided.
It grew with us, and bad, designing men
Fanned with their ready breath the fatal fire:
Frantics, enthusiasts, with sword and dagger
Armed the uncalled-for hand! This is the curse
Of kings, that they, divided, tear the world
In pieces with their hatred, and let loose
The raging furies of all hellish strife!
No foreign tongue is now between us, sister,
[*Approaching her confidently, and with a flattering tone.*
Now stand we face to face; now, sister, speak:
Name but my crime, I'll fully satisfy you, —
Alas! had you vouchsafed to hear me then,
When I so earnest sought to meet your eye,
It never would have come to this, nor would,
Here in this mournful place, have happened now
This so distressful, this so mournful meeting.

ELIZ. My better stars preserved me. I was warned,
And laid not to my breast the poisonous adder!
Accuse not fate! your own deceitful heart
It was, the wild ambition of your house:
As yet no enmities had passed between us,

When your imperious uncle, the proud priest,
Whose shameless hand grasps at all crowns, attacked me
With unprovoked hostility, and taught
You, but too docile, to assume my arms,
To vest yourself with my imperial title,
And meet me in the lists in mortal strife:
What arms employed he not to storm my throne?
The curses of the priests, the people's sword,
The dreadful weapons of religious frenzy; —
Even here in my own kingdom's peaceful haunts
He fanned the flames of civil insurrection; —
But God is with me, and the haughty priest
Has not maintained the field. The blow was aimed
Full at my head, but yours it is which falls!

MARY. I'm in the hand of heaven. You never will
Exert so cruelly the power it gives you.

ELIZ. Who shall prevent me? Say, did not your uncle
Set all the kings of Europe the example,
How to conclude a peace with those they hate.
Be mine the school of Saint Bartholomew;
What's kindred then to me, or nation's laws?
The church can break the bands of every duty;
It consecrates the regicide, the traitor;
I only practise what your priests have taught!
Say then, what surety can be offered me,
Should I magnanimously loose your bonds?
Say, with what lock can I secure your faith,
Which by Saint Peter's keys cannot be opened?
Force is my only surety; no alliance
Can be concluded with a race of vipers.

MARY. Oh! this is but your wretched, dark suspicion!
For you have constantly regarded me
But as a stranger, and an enemy.
Had you declared me heir to your dominions,
As is my right, then gratitude and love
In me had fixed, for you, a faithful friend
And kinswoman.

ELIZABETH. Your friendship is abroad,
Your house is papacy, the monk your brother.

Name you my successor! The treacherous snare!
That in my life you might seduce my people;
And, like a sly Armida, in your net
Entangle all our noble English youth;
That all might turn to the new rising sun,
And I ——

MARY. O sister, rule your realm in peace;
I give up every claim to these domains —
Alas! the pinions of my soul are lamed;
Greatness entices me no more: your point
Is gained; I am but Mary's shadow now —
My noble spirit is at last broke down
By long captivity: — you've done your worst
On me; you have destroyed me in my bloom!
Now, end your work, my sister; — speak at length
The word, which to pronounce has brought you hither;
For I will ne'er believe that you are come,
To mock unfeelingly your hapless victim.
Pronounce this word; — say, "Mary, you are free:
You have already felt my power, — learn now
To honor too my generosity."
Say this, and I will take my life, will take
My freedom, as a present from your hands.
One word makes all undone; — I wait for it; —
Oh, let it not be needlessly delayed.
Woe to you if you end not with this word!
For should you not, like some divinity,
Dispensing noble blessings, quit me now,
Then, sister, not for all this island's wealth,
For all the realms encircled by the deep,
Would I exchange my present lot for yours.

ELIZ. And you confess at last that you are conquered:
Are all your schemes run out? No more assassins
Now on the road? Will no adventurer
Attempt again for you the sad achievement?
Yes, madam, it is over: — you'll seduce
No mortal more. The world has other cares; —
None is ambitious of the dangerous honor
Of being your fourth husband — you destroy
Your wooers like your husbands.

MARY (*starting angrily*). Sister, sister! —
Grant me forbearance, all ye powers of heaven!
ELIZABETH (*regards her long with a look of proud contempt*).
Those then, my Lord of Leicester, are the charms
Which no man with impunity can view,
Near which no woman dare to stand?
In sooth, this honor has been cheaply gained;
She who to all is common, may with ease
Become the common object of applause.
MARY. This is too much!
ELIZABETH (*laughing insultingly*).
You show us now, indeed,
Your real face; till now 'twas but the mask.
MARY (*burning with rage, yet dignified and noble*).
My sins were human, and the faults of youth:
Superior force misled me. I have never
Denied or sought to hide it: I despised
All false appearance, as became a queen.
The worst of me is known, and I can say,
That I am better than the fame I bear.
Woe to you! when, in time to come, the world
Shall draw the robe of honor from your deeds,
With which thy arch-hypocrisy has veiled
The raging flames of lawless, secret lust.
Virtue was not your portion from your mother;
Well know we what it was which brought the head
Of Anna Boleyn to the fatal block.
SHREWSBURY (*stepping between both* QUEENS).
Oh! Heaven! Alas, and must it come to this!
Is this the moderation, the submission,
My lady? ——
MARY. Moderation! I've supported
What human nature can support: farewell,
Lamb-hearted resignation, passive patience,
Fly to thy native heaven; burst at length
Thy bonds, come forward from thy dreary cave,
In all thy fury, long suppressed rancor!
And thou, who to the angered basilisk
Impart'st the murderous glance, oh, arm my tongue
With poisoned darts!

SHREWSBURY. She is beside herself!
Exasperated, mad! My liege, forgive her.
[ELIZABETH, *speechless with anger, casts enraged looks at* MARY.
LEICESTER (*in the most violent agitation; he seeks to lead* ELIZABETH *away*).
Attend not to her rage! Away, away,
From this disastrous place!
MARY (*raising her voice*). A bastard soils,
Profanes the English throne! The generous Britons
Are cheated by a juggler, [whose whole figure
Is false and painted, heart as well as face!]
If right prevailed, you now would in the dust
Before me lie, for I'm your rightful monarch!
[ELIZABETH *hastily quits the stage; the lords follow her in the greatest consternation.*

SCENE V.

MARY, KENNEDY.

KEN. What have you done? She has gone hence in wrath
All hope is over now!
MARY (*still quite beside herself*).
Gone hence in wrath!
She carries death within her heart! I know it.
[*Falling on* KENNEDY'S *bosom.*
Now I am happy, Hannah! and at last,
After whole years of sorrow and abasement,
One moment of victorious revenge!
A weight falls off my heart, a weight of mountains;
I plunged the steel in my oppressor's breast!
KEN. Unhappy lady! Frenzy overcomes you.
Yes, you have wounded your inveterate foe;
'Tis she who wields the lightning, she is queen,
You have insulted her before her minion.
MARY. I have abased her before Leicester's eyes;
He saw it, he was witness of my triumph.
How did I hurl her from her haughty height,
He saw it, and his presence strengthened me.

Scene VI.

Enter Mortimer.

Ken. Oh, sir! What an occurrence!
Mortimer. I heard all—
[*Gives the nurse a sign to repair to her post, and draws nearer; his whole appearance expresses the utmost violence of passion.*
Thine is the palm;—thou trod'st her to the dust!—
Thou wast the queen, she was the malefactor;—
I am transported with thy noble courage;—
Yes! I adore thee; like a Deity,
My sense is dazzled by thy heavenly beams.
Mary (*with vivacity and expectation*).
You spoke with Leicester, gave my letter to him.
My present, too?—oh, speak, sir.
Mortimer (*beholding her with glowing looks*).
How thy noble,
Thy royal indignation shone, and cast
A glory round thy beauty; yes, by heavens,
Thou art the fairest woman upon earth!
Mary. Sir, satisfy, I beg you, my impatience;
What says his lordship? Say, sir, may I hope?
Mort. Who?—he?—he is a wretch, a very coward,
Hope naught from him; despise him, and forget him!
Mary. What say you?
Mortimer. He deliver, and possess you!
Why let him dare it:—he!—he must with me
In mortal contest first deserve the prize!
Mary. You gave him not my letter? Then, indeed
My hopes are lost!
Mortimer. The coward loves his life.
Whoe'er would rescue you, and call you his,
Must boldly dare affront e'en death itself!
Mary. Will he do nothing for me?
Mortimer. Speak not of him.
What can he do? What need have we of him?
I will release you; I alone.
Mary. Alas!
What power have you?

MORTIMER. Deceive yourself no more;
Think not your case is now as formerly;
The moment that the queen thus quitted you,
And that your interview had ta'en this turn,
All hope was lost, each way of mercy shut.
Now deeds must speak, now boldness must decide
To compass all must all be hazarded;
You must be free before the morning break.

MARY. What say you, sir — to-night? — impossible!

MORT. Hear what has been resolved: — I led my friend
Into a private chapel, where a priest
Heard our confession, and, for every sin
We had committed, gave us absolution;
He gave us absolution too, beforehand,
For every crime we might commit in future;
He gave us too the final sacrament,
And we are ready for the final journey.

MARY. Oh, what an awful, dreadful preparation!

MORT. We scale, this very night, the castle's walls;
The keys are in my power; the guards we murder!
Then from thy chamber bear thee forcibly.
Each living soul must die beneath our hands,
That none remain who might disclose the deed.

MARY. And Drury, Paulet, my two keepers, they
Would sooner spill their dearest drop of blood.

MORT. They fall the very first beneath my steel.

MARY. What, sir! Your uncle? How! Your second father!

MORT. Must perish by my hand — I murder him!

MARY. Oh, bloody outrage!

MORTIMER. We have been absolved
Beforehand; I may perpetrate the worst;
I can, I will do so!

MARY. Oh, dreadful, dreadful!

MORT. And should I be obliged to kill the queen,
I've sworn upon the host, it must be done!

MARY. No, Mortimer; ere so much blood for me ——

MORT. What is the life of all compared to thee,
And to my love? The bond which holds the world
Together may be loosed, a second deluge
Come rolling on, and swallow all creation!

Henceforth I value nothing; ere I quit
My hold on thee, may earth and time be ended!

MARY (*retiring*).

Heavens! Sir, what language, and what looks! They scare,
They frighten me!

MORTIMER (*with unsteady looks, expressive of quiet madness*).

Life's but a moment — death
Is but a moment too. Why! let them drag me
To Tyburn, let them tear me limb from limb,
With red-hot pincers —

[*Violently approaching her with extended arms.*

If I clasp but thee
Within my arms, thou fervently beloved!

MARY. Madman, avaunt!

MORTIMER.

To rest upon this bosom,
To press upon this passion-breathing mouth ——

MARY. Leave me, for God's sake, sir; let me go in ——

MORT. He is a madman who neglects to clasp
His bliss in folds that never may be loosed,
When Heaven has kindly given it to his arms.
I will deliver you, and though it cost
A thousand lives, I do it; but I swear,
As God's in Heaven I will possess you too!

MARY. Oh! will no God, no angel shelter me?
Dread destiny! thou throwest me, in thy wrath,
From one tremendous terror to the other!
Was I then born to waken naught but frenzy?
Do hate and love conspire alike to fright me!

MORT. Yes, glowing as their hatred is my love;
They would behead thee, they would wound this neck,
So dazzling white, with the disgraceful axe!
Oh! offer to the living god of joy
What thou must sacrifice to bloody hate!
Inspire thy happy lover with those charms
Which are no more thine own. Those golden locks
Are forfeit to the dismal powers of death,
Oh! use them to entwine thy slave forever!

MARY. Alas! alas! what language must I hear!
My woe, my sufferings should be sacred to you,

Although my royal brows are so no more.
MORT. The crown is fallen from thy brows, thou hast
No more of earthly majesty. Make trial,
Raise thy imperial voice, see if a friend,
If a deliverer will rise to save you.
Thy moving form alone remains, the high,
The godlike influence of thy heavenly beauty;
This bids me venture all, this arms my hand
With might, and drives me tow'rd the headsman's axe.
MARY. Oh! who will save me from his raging madness?
MORT. Service that's bold demands a bold reward.
Why shed their blood the daring? Is not life
Life's highest good? And he a madman who
Casts life away? First will I take my rest,
Upon the breast that glows with love's own fire!
[*He presses her violently to his bosom,*
MARY. Oh, must I call for help against the man
Who would deliver me!
MORTIMER. Thou'rt not unfeeling,
The world ne'er censured thee for frigid rigor;
The fervent prayer of love can touch thy heart.
Thou mad'st the minstrel Rizzio blest, and gavest
Thyself a willing prey to Bothwell's arms.
MARY. Presumptuous man!
MORTIMER. He was indeed thy tyrant,
Thou trembled'st at his rudeness, whilst thou loved'st him;
Well, then — if only terror can obtain thee —
By the infernal gods!
MARY. Away — you're mad!
MORT. I'll teach thee then before me, too, to tremble.
KENNEDY (*entering suddenly*).
They're coming — they approach — the park is filled
With men in arms.
MORTIMER (*starting and catching at his sword*).
I will defend you — I ——
MARY. O Hannah! save me, save me from his hands.
Where shall I find, poor sufferer, an asylum?
Oh! to what saint shall I address my prayers?
Here force assails me, and within is murder!
[*She flies towards the house,* KENNEDY *follows her.*

Scene VII.

Mortimer, Paulet, *and* Drury *rush in in the greatest consternation. Attendants hasten over the stage.*

Paul. Shut all the portals — draw the bridges up.
Mort. What is the matter, uncle?
Paulet. Where is the murderess?
Down with her, down into the darkest dungeon!
Mort. What is the matter? What has passed?
Paulet. The queen!
Accursed hand! Infernal machination!
Mort. The queen! What queen?
Paul. What queen!
The Queen of England;
She has been murdered on the road to London.
[*Hastens into the house.*

Scene VIII.

Mortimer, *soon after* O'Kelly.

Mortimer (*after a pause*).
Am I then mad? Came not one running by
But now, and cried aloud, the queen is murdered!
No, no! I did but dream. A feverish fancy
Paints that upon my mind as true and real,
Which but existed in my frantic thoughts
Who's there? It is O'Kelly. So dismayed!
O'Kelly (*rushing in*).
Flee, Mortimer, oh! flee — for all is lost!
Mort. What then is lost?
O'Kelly. Stand not on question. Think
On speedy flight.
Mortimer. What has occurred?
O'Kelly. Sauvage,
That madman, struck the blow.
Mortimer. It is then true!
O'Kelly. True, true — oh! save yourself.
Mortimer (*exultingly*). The queen is murdered —
And Mary shall ascend the English throne!
O'Kel. Is murdered! Who said that?
Mortimer. Yourself.

O'Kelly. She lives,
And I, and you, and all of us are lost.
Mort. She lives!
O'Kelly. The blow was badly aimed, her cloak
Received it. Shrewsbury disarmed the murderer.
Mort. She lives!
O'Kelly. She lives to whelm us all in ruin;
Come, they surround the park already; come.
Mort. Who did this frantic deed?
O'Kelly. It was the monk
From Toulon, whom you saw immersed in thought,
As in the chapel the pope's bull was read,
Which poured anathemas upon the queen.
He wished to take the nearest, shortest way,
To free, with one bold stroke, the church of God,
And gain the crown of martyrdom: he trusted
His purpose only to the priest, and struck
The fatal blow upon the road to London.
Mortimer (*after a long silence*).
Alas! a fierce, destructive fate pursues thee,
Unhappy one! Yes — now thy death is fixed;
Thy very angel has prepared thy fall!
O'Kel. Say, whither will you take your flight? I go
To hide me in the forests of the north.
Mort. Fly thither, and may God attend your flight;
I will remain, and still attempt to save
My love; if not, my bed shall be upon her grave.
[*Exeunt at different sides.*

ACT IV.

Scene I. — *Antechamber.*

Count Aubespine, *the* Earls *of* Kent *and* Leicester

Aub. How fares her majesty? My lords, you see me
Still stunned, and quite beside myself for terror!
How happened it? How was it possible
That in the midst of this most loyal people ——
Leic. The deed was not attempted by the people.
The assassin was a subject of your king,
A Frenchman.

AUBESPINE. Sure a lunatic.
LEIC. A papist,
Count Aubespine!

SCENE II.

Enter BURLEIGH, *in conversation with* DAVISON.

BURLEIGH. Sir; let the death-warrant
Be instantly made out, and pass the seal;
Then let it be presented to the queen;
Her majesty must sign it. Hasten, sir,
We have no time to lose.
DAVISON. It shall be done. [*Exit.*
AUB. My lord high-treasurer, my faithful heart
Shares in the just rejoicings of the realm.
Praised be almighty Heaven, who hath averted
Assassination from our much-loved queen!
BUR. Praised be His name, who thus hath turned to scorn
The malice of our foes!
AUBESPINE. May heaven confound
The perpetrator of this cursed deed!
BUR. Its perpetrator and its base contriver!
AUB. Please you, my lord, to bring me to the queen,
That I may lay the warm congratulations
Of my imperial master at her feet.
BUR. There is no need of this.
AUBESPINE (*officiously*). My Lord of Burleigh,
I know my duty.
BURLEIGH. Sir, your duty is
To quit, and that without delay, this kingdom.
AUBESPINE (*stepping back with surprise*).
What! How is this?
BURLEIGH. The sacred character
Of an ambassador to-day protects you,
But not to-morrow.
AUBESPINE. What's my crime?
BURLEIGH. Should I
Once name it, there were then no pardon for it.
AUB. I hope, my lord, my charge's privilege ——
BUR. Screens not a traitor.

LEICESTER *and* KENT. Traitor! How?
AUBESPINE. My lord,
Consider well ——
BURLEIGH. Your passport was discovered
In the assassin's pocket.
KENT. Righteous heaven!
AUB. Sir, many passports are subscribed by me;
I cannot know the secret thoughts of men.
BUR. He in your house confessed, and was absolved.
AUB. My house is open ——
BURLEIGH. To our enemies.
AUB. I claim a strict inquiry.
BURLEIGH. Tremble at it.
AUB. My monarch in my person is insulted,
He will annul the marriage contract.
BURLEIGH. That
My royal mistress has annulled already;
England will not unite herself with France.
My Lord of Kent, I give to you the charge
To see Count Aubespine embarked in safety.
The furious populace has stormed his palace,
Where a whole arsenal of arms was found;
Should he be found, they'll tear him limb from limb,
Conceal him till the fury is abated —
Your answer for his life.
AUBESPINE. I go — I leave
This kingdom where they sport with public treaties
And trample on the laws of nations. Yet
My monarch, be assured, will vent his rage
In direst vengeance!
BURLEIGH. Let him seek it here.
[*Exeunt* KENT *and* AUBESPINE.

SCENE III.

LEICESTER, BURLEIGH.

LEIC. And thus you loose yourself the knot of union
Which you officiously, uncalled for, bound!
You have deserved but little of your country,
My lord; this trouble was superfluous.

BUR. My aim was good, though fate declared against it;
Happy is he who has so fair a conscience!
LEIC. Well know we the mysterious mien of Burleigh
When he is on the hunt for deeds of treason.
Now you are in your element, my lord;
A monstrous outrage has been just committed,
And darkness veils as yet its perpetrators:
Now will a court of inquisition rise;
Each word, each look be weighed; men's very thoughts
Be summoned to the bar. You are, my lord,
The mighty man, the Atlas of the state,
All England's weight lies upon your shoulders.
BUR. In you, my lord, I recognize my master;
For such a victory as your eloquence
Has gained I cannot boast.
LEICESTER. What means your lordship?
BUR. You were the man who knew, behind my back,
To lure the queen to Fotheringay Castle.
LEIC. Behind your back! When did I fear to act
Before your face?
BURLEIGH. You led her majesty?
Oh, no — you led her not — it was the queen
Who was so gracious as to lead you thither.
LEIC. What mean you, my lord, by that?
BURLEIGH. The noble part
You forced the queen to play! The glorious triumph
Which you prepared for her! Too gracious princess!
So shamelessly, so wantonly to mock
Thy unsuspecting goodness, to betray thee
So pitiless to thy exulting foe!
This, then, is the magnanimity, the grace
Which suddenly possessed you in the council!
The Stuart is for this so despicable,
So weak an enemy, that it would scarce
Be worth the pains to stain us with her blood.
A specious plan! and sharply pointed too;
'Tis only pity this sharp point is broken.
LEIC. Unworthy wretch! this instant follow me,
And answer at the throne this insolence.

BUR. You'll find me there, my lord; and look you well
That there your eloquence desert you not. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

LEICESTER *alone; then* MORTIMER.

LEIC. I am detected! All my plot's disclosed!
How has my evil genius tracked my steps!
Alas! if he has proofs, if she should learn
That I have held a secret correspondence
With her worst enemy; how criminal
Shall I appear to her! How false will then
My counsel seem, and all the fatal pains
I took to lure the queen to Fotheringay!
I've shamefully betrayed, I have exposed her
To her detested enemy's revilings!
Oh! never, never can she pardon that.
All will appear as if premeditated.
The bitter turn of this sad interview,
The triumph and the tauntings of her rival;
Yes, e'en the murderous hand which had prepared
A bloody, monstrous, unexpected fate;
All, all will be ascribed to my suggestions!
I see no rescue! nowhere — ha! Who comes?

[MORTIMER *enters in the most violent uneasiness, and looks with apprehension round him.*

MORT. Lord Leicester! Is it you! Are we alone?
LEIC. Ill-fated wretch, away! What seek you here?
MORT. They are upon our track — upon yours, too;
Be vigilant!
LEICESTER. Away, away!
MORTIMER. They know
That private conferences have been held
At Aubespine's ——
LEICESTER. What's that to me?
MORTIMER. They know, too,
That the assassin ——
LEICESTER. That is your affair —
Audacious wretch! to dare to mix my name
In your detested outrage: go; defend
Your bloody deeds yourself!

MORTIMER. But only hear me.
LEICESTER (*violently enraged*).
Down, down to hell! Why cling you at my heels
Like an infernal spirit! I disclaim you;
I know you not; I make no common cause
With murderers!
MORTIMER. You will not hear me, then?
I came to warn you; you too are detected.
LEIC. How! What?
MORTIMER. Lord Burleigh went to Fotheringay
Just as the luckless deed had been attempted;
Searched with strict scrutiny the queen's apartments,
And found there ——
LEICESTER. What?
MORTIMER. A letter which the queen
Had just addressed to you ——
LEICESTER. Unhappy woman!
MORT. In which she calls on you to keep your word,
Renews the promise of her hand, and mentions
The picture which she sent you.
LEICESTER. Death and hell!
MORT. Lord Burleigh has the letter.
LEICESTER. I am lost!
[*During the following speech of* MORTIMER, LEICESTER *goes up and down as in despair.*
MORT. Improve the moment; be beforehand with him,
And save yourself — save her! An oath can clear
Your fame; contrive excuses to avert
The worst. I am disarmed, can do no more;
My comrades are dispersed — to pieces fallen
Our whole confederacy. For Scotland I
To rally such new friends as there I may.
'Tis now your turn, my lord; try what your weight,
What bold assurance can effect.
LEICESTER (*stops suddenly as if resolved*). I will.
[*Goes to the door, opens it, and calls.*
Who waits without? Guards! seize this wretched traitor!
[*To the officer, who comes in with soldiers.*
And guard him closely! A most dreadful plot
Is brought to light — I'll to her majesty.

MORTIMER (*stands for a time petrified with wonder; collects himself soon, and follows* LEICESTER *with his looks expressive of the most sovereign contempt*).

Infamous wretch! But I deserve it all.
Who told me then to trust this practised villain?
Now o'er my head he strides, and on my fall
He builds the bridge of safety! be it so;
Go, save thyself — my lips are sealed forever;
I will not join even thee in my destruction;
I would not own thee, no, not even in death;
Life is the faithless villain's only good!

[*To the officer of the guard, who steps forward to seize him.*

What wilt thou, slave of tyranny, with me?
I laugh to scorn thy threatenings; I am free.
[*Drawing a dagger.*

OFFIC. He's armed; rush in and wrest his weapon from him. [*They rush upon him, he defends himself.*

MORTIMER (*raising his voice*).

And in this latest moment shall my heart
Expand itself in freedom, and my tongue
Shall break this long constraint. Curse and destruction
Light on you all who have betrayed your faith,
Your God, and your true sovereign! Who, alike
To earthly Mary false as to the heavenly,
Have sold your duties to this bastard queen!

OFFIC. Hear you these blasphemies? Rush forward — seize him.

MORT. Beloved queen! I could not set thee free;
Yet take a lesson from me how to die.
Mary, thou holy one, O! pray for me!
And take me to thy heavenly home on high.
[*Stabs himself, and falls into the arms of the guard.*

SCENE V.

The apartment of the Queen.

ELIZABETH, *with a letter in her hand*, BURLEIGH.

ELIZ. To lure me thither! trifle with me thus!
The traitor! Thus to lead me, as in triumph,

Into the presence of his paramour!
Oh, Burleigh! ne'er was woman so deceived.

BUR. I cannot yet conceive what potent means,
What magic he exerted, to surprise
My queen's accustomed prudence.

ELIZABETH. Oh, I die
For shame! How must he laugh to scorn my weakness!
I thought to humble her, and was myself
The object of her bitter scorn.

BURLEIGH. By this
You see how faithfully I counselled you.

ELIZ. Oh, I am sorely punished, that I turned
My ear from your wise counsels; yet I thought
I might confide in him. Who could suspect
Beneath the vows of faithfullest devotion
A deadly snare? In whom can I confide
When he deceives me? He, whom I have made
The greatest of the great, and ever set
The nearest to my heart, and in this court
Allowed to play the master and the king.

BUR. Yet in that very moment he betrayed you.
Betrayed you to this wily Queen of Scots.

ELIZ. Oh, she shall pay me for it with her life!
Is the death-warrant ready?

BURLEIGH. 'Tis prepared
As you commanded.

ELIZABETH. She shall surely die —
He shall behold her fall, and fall himself!
I've driven him from my heart. No longer love,
Revenge alone is there: and high as once
He stood, so low and shameful be his fall!
A monument of my severity,
As once the proud example of my weakness.
Conduct him to the Tower; let a commission
Of peers be named to try him. He shall feel
In its full weight the rigor of the law.

BUR. But he will seek thy presence; he will clear ——

ELIZ. How can he clear himself? Does not the letter
Convict him. Oh, his crimes are manifest!

BUR. But thou art mild and gracious! His appearance,
His powerful presence ——

ELIZABETH. I will never see him;
No never, never more. Are orders given
Not to admit him should he come?
BURLEIGH. 'Tis done.
PAGE (*entering*).
The Earl of Leicester!
ELIZABETH. The presumptuous man!
I will not see him. Tell him that I will not.
PAGE. I am afraid to bring my lord this message,
Nor would he credit it.
ELIZABETH. And I have raised him
So high that my own servants tremble more
At him than me!
BURLEIGH (*to the* PAGE). The queen forbids his presence.
[*The* PAGE *retires slowly.*
ELIZABETH (*after a pause*).
Yet, if it still were possible? If he
Could clear himself? Might it not be a snare
Laid by the cunning one, to sever me
From my best friends — the ever-treacherous harlot!
She might have writ the letter, but to raise
Poisonous suspicion in my heart, to ruin
The man she hates.
BURLEIGH. Yet, gracious queen, consider.

SCENE VI.

LEICESTER (*bursts open the door with violence, and enters with an imperious air*).

LEIC. Fain would I see the shameless man who dares
Forbid me the apartments of my queen!
ELIZABETH (*avoiding his sight*).
Audacious slave!
LEICESTER. To turn me from the door!
If for a Burleigh she be visible,
She must be so to me!
BURLEIGH. My lord, you are
Too bold, without permission to intrude.
LEIC. My lord, you are too arrogant, to take
The lead in these apartments. What! Permission!

I know of none who stands so high at court
As to permit my doings, or refuse them.
[*Humbly approaching* ELIZABETH
'Tis from my sovereign's lips alone that I ——
ELIZABETH (*without looking at him*).
Out of my sight, deceitful, worthless traitor!
LEIC. 'Tis not my gracious queen I hear, but Burleigh,
My enemy, in these ungentle words.
To my imperial mistress I appeal;
Thou hast lent him thine ear; I ask the like.
ELIZ. Speak, shameless wretch! Increase your crime — deny it.
LEIC. Dismiss this troublesome intruder first.
Withdraw, my lord; it is not of your office
To play the third man here: between the queen
And me there is no need of witnesses.
Retire ——
ELIZABETH (*to* BURLEIGH).
Remain, my lord; 'tis my command.
LEIC. What has a third to do 'twixt thee and me?
I have to clear myself before my queen,
My worshipped queen; I will maintain the rights
Which thou hast given me; these rights are sacred,
And I insist upon it, that my lord
Retire.
ELIZABETH. This haughty tone befits you well.
LEIC. It well befits me; am not I the man,
The happy man, to whom thy gracious favor
Has given the highest station? this exalts me
Above this Burleigh, and above them all.
Thy heart imparted me this rank, and what
Thy favor gave, by heavens I will maintain
At my life's hazard. Let him go, it needs
Two moments only to exculpate me.
ELIZ. Think not, with cunning words, to hide the truth
LEIC. That fear from him, so voluble of speech:
But what I say is to the heart addressed;
And I will justify what I have dared
To do, confiding in thy generous favor,
Before thy heart alone. I recognize
No other jurisdiction.

ELIZABETH. Base deceiver!
'Tis this, e'en this, which above all condemns you.
My lord, produce the letter. [*To* BURLEIGH.
BURLEIGH. Here it is.
LEICESTER (*running over the letter without losing his presence of mind*).
'Tis Mary Stuart's hand ——
ELIZABETH. Read and be dumb!
LEICESTER (*having read it quietly*).
Appearance is against me, yet I hope
I shall not by appearances be judged.
ELIZ. Can you deny your secret correspondence
With Mary? — that she sent and you received
Her picture, that you gave her hopes of rescue?
LEIC. It were an easy matter, if I felt
That I were guilty of a crime, to challenge
The testimony of my enemy:
Yet bold is my good conscience. I confess
That she hath said the truth.
ELIZABETH. Well then, thou wretch!
BUR. His own words sentence him ——
ELIZABETH. Out of my sight!
Away! Conduct the traitor to the Tower!
LEIC. I am no traitor; it was wrong, I own,
To make a secret of this step to thee;
Yet pure was my intention, it was done
To search into her plots and to confound them.
ELIZ. Vain subterfuge!
BUR. And do you think, my lord ——
LEIC. I've played a dangerous game, I know it well,
And none but Leicester dare be bold enough
To risk it at this court. The world must know
How I detest this Stuart, and the rank
Which here I hold; my monarch's confidence,
With which she honors me, must sure suffice
To overturn all doubt of my intentions.
Well may the man thy favor above all
Distinguishes pursue a daring course
To do his duty!
BURLEIGH. If the course was good,
Wherefore conceal it?

LEICESTER. You are used, my lord,
To prate before you act; the very chime
Of your own deeds. This is your manner, lord;
But mine is first to act, and then to speak.
BUR. Yes, now you speak because you must.
LEICESTER (*measuring him proudly and disdainfully with his eyes*).
And you
Boast of a wonderful, a mighty action,
That you have saved the queen, have snatched away
The mask from treachery; all is known to you;
You think, forsooth, that nothing can escape
Your penetrating eyes. Poor, idle boaster!
In spite of all your cunning, Mary Stuart
Was free to-day, had I not hindered it.
BUR. How? You?
LEICESTER. Yes, I, my lord; the queen confided
In Mortimer; she opened to the youth
Her inmost soul! Yes, she went further still;
She gave him, too, a secret, bloody charge,
Which Paulet had before refused with horror.
Say, is it so, or not?
[*The* QUEEN *and* BURLEIGH *look at one another with astonishment.*
BURLEIGH. Whence know ye this?
LEIC. Nay, is it not a fact? Now answer me.
And where, my lord, where were your thousand eyes,
Not to discover Mortimer was false?
That he, the Guise's tool, and Mary's creature,
A raging papist, daring fanatic,
Was come to free the Stuart, and to murder
The Queen of England!
ELIZABETH (*with the utmost astonishment*).
How! This Mortimer!
LEIC. 'Twas he through whom our correspondence passed
This plot it was which introduced me to him.
This very day she was to have been torn
From her confinement; he, this very moment,
Disclosed his plan to me: I took him prisoner,

And gave him to the guard, when in despair
To see his work o'erturned, himself unmasked,
He slew himself!

ELIZABETH. Oh, I indeed have been
Deceived beyond example, Mortimer!

BUR. This happened then but now? Since last we parted?

LEIC. For my own sake, I must lament the deed;
That he was thus cut off. His testimony,
Were he alive, had fully cleared my fame,
And freed me from suspicion; 'twas for this
That I surrendered him to open justice.
I thought to choose the most impartial course
To verify and fix my innocence
Before the world.

BURLEIGH. He killed himself, you say!
Is't so? Or did you kill him?

LEICESTER. Vile suspicion!
Hear but the guard who seized him.
[*He goes to the door, and calls.*
Ho! who waits!
[*Enter the officer of the guard.*
Sir, tell the queen how Mortimer expired.

OFFIC. I was on duty in the palace watch,
When suddenly my lord threw wide the door,
And ordered me to take the knight in charge,
Denouncing him a traitor: upon this
He grew enraged, and with most bitter curses
Against our sovereign and our holy faith,
He drew a dagger, and before the guards
Could hinder his intention, plunged the steel
Into his heart, and fell a lifeless corpse.

LEIC. 'Tis well; you may withdraw. Her majesty
Has heard enough.
[*The officer withdraws.*

ELIZABETH. Oh, what a deep abyss
Of monstrous deeds?

LEICESTER. Who was it, then, my queen,
Who saved you? Was it Burleigh? Did he know
The dangers which surrounded you? Did he

Avert them from your head? Your faithful Leicester
Was your good angel.

BURLEIGH. This same Mortimer
Died most conveniently for you, my lord.

ELIZ. What I should say I know not. I believe you,
And I believe you not. I think you guilty,
And yet I think you not. A curse on her
Who caused me all this anguish.

LEICESTER. She must die;
I now myself consent unto her death.
I formerly advised you to suspend
The sentence, till some arm should rise anew
On her behalf; the case has happened now,
And I demand her instant execution.

BUR. You give this counsel? You?

LEICESTER. Howe'er it wound
My feelings to be forced to this extreme,
Yet now I see most clearly, now I feel
That the queen's welfare asks this bloody victim.
'Tis my proposal, therefore, that the writ
Be drawn at once to fix the execution.

BURLEIGH (*to the* QUEEN).
Since, then, his lordship shows such earnest zeal,
Such loyalty, 'twere well were he appointed
To see the execution of the sentence.

LEIC. Who? I?

BURLEIGH. Yes, you; you surely ne'er could find
A better means to shake off the suspicion
Which rests upon you still, than to command
Her, whom 'tis said you love, to be beheaded.

ELIZABETH (*looking steadfastly at* LEICESTER).
My lord advises well. So be it, then.

LEIC. It were but fit that my exalted rank
Should free me from so mournful a commission,
Which would indeed, in every sense, become
A Burleigh better than the Earl of Leicester.
The man who stands so near the royal person
Should have no knowledge of such fatal scenes:
But yet to prove my zeal, to satisfy
My queen, I waive my charge's privilege,
And take upon myself this hateful duty.

ELIZ. Lord Burleigh shall partake this duty with you.
[*To* BURLEIGH.
So be the warrant instantly prepared.
[BURLEIGH *withdraws; a tumult heard without.*

SCENE VII.

The QUEEN, *the* EARL OF KENT.

ELIZ. How now, my Lord of Kent? What uproar's this
I hear without?
KENT. My queen, it is thy people,
Who, round the palace ranged, impatiently
Demand to see their sovereign.
ELIZABETH. What's their wish?
KENT. A panic terror has already spread
Through London, that thy life has been attempted;
That murderers commissioned from the pope
Beset thee; that the Catholics have sworn
To rescue from her prison Mary Stuart,
And to proclaim her queen. Thy loyal people
Believe it, and are mad; her head alone
Can quiet them; this day must be her last.
ELIZ. How! Will they force me, then?
KENT. They are resolved ——

SCENE VIII.

Enter BURLEIGH *and* DAVISON, *with a paper.*

ELIZ. Well, Davison?
DAV. (*approaches earnestly*). Your orders are obeyed,
My queen ——
ELIZABETH. What orders, sir?
[*As she is about to take the paper, she shudders, and starts back.*
Oh, God!
BURLEIGH. Obey
Thy people's voice; it is the voice of God.
ELIZABETH (*irresolute, as if in contest with herself*)
Oh, my good lord, who will assure me now
That what I hear is my whole people's voice,

The voice of all the world! Ah! much I fear,
That, if I now should listen to the wish
Of the wild multitude, a different voice
Might soon be heard; — and that the very men,
Who now by force oblige me to this step,
May, when 'tis taken, heavily condemn me!

Scene IX.

Enter the Earl of Shrewsbury (*who enters with great emotion*).

Shrew. Hold fast, my queen, they wish to hurry thee;
[*Seeing* Davison *with the paper.*
Be firm — or is it then decided? — is it
Indeed decided? I behold a paper
Of ominous appearance in his hand;
Let it not at this moment meet thy eyes,
My queen! ——

Eliz. Good Shrewsbury! I am constrained ——

Shrew. Who can constrain thee? Thou art Queen of England,
Here must thy majesty assert its rights:
Command those savage voices to be silent,
Who take upon themselves to put constraint
Upon thy royal will, to rule thy judgment.
Fear only, blind conjecture, moves thy people;
Thou art thyself beside thyself; thy wrath
Is grievously provoked: thou art but mortal,
And canst not thus ascend the judgment seat.

Bur. Judgment has long been past. It is not now
The time to speak but execute the sentence.

Kent (*who upon* Shrewsbury's *entry had retired, comes back*). The tumult gains apace; there are no means
To moderate the people.

Elizabeth (*to* Shrewsbury). See, my lord,
How they press on.

Shrewsbury. I only ask a respite;
A single word traced by thy hand decides
The peace, the happiness of all thy life!
Thou hast for years considered, let not then
A moment ruled by passion hurry thee —

But a short respite — recollect thyself!
Wait for a moment of tranquillity.

BURLEIGH (*violently*).

Wait for it — pause — delay — till flames of fire
Consume the realm; until the fifth attempt
Of murder be successful! God, indeed,
Hath thrice delivered thee; thy late escape
Was marvellous, and to expect again
A miracle would be to tempt thy God!

SHREW. That God, whose potent hand hath thrice preserved thee,
Who lent my aged feeble arm the strength
To overcome the madman: — he deserves
Thy confidence. I will not raise the voice
Of justice now, for now is not the time;
Thou canst not hear it in this storm of passion.
Yet listen but to this! Thou tremblest now
Before this living Mary — tremble rather
Before the murdered, the beheaded Mary.
She will arise, and quit her grave, will range
A fiend of discord, an avenging ghost,
Around thy realm, and turn thy people's hearts
From their allegiance. For as yet the Britons
Hate her, because they fear her; but most surely
Will they avenge her when she is no more.
They will no more behold the enemy
Of their belief, they will but see in her
The much-lamented issue of their kings
A sacrifice to jealousy and hate.
Then quickly shalt thou see the sudden change
When thou hast done the bloody deed; then go
Through London, seek thy people, which till now
Around thee swarmed delighted; thou shalt see
Another England, and another people;
For then no more the godlike dignity
Of justice, which subdued thy subjects' hearts,
Will beam around thee. Fear, the dread ally
Of tyranny, will shuddering march before thee,
And make a wilderness in every street —
The last, extremest crime thou hast committed.
What head is safe, if the anointed fall?

ELIZ. Ah! Shrewsbury, you saved my life, you turned
The murderous steel aside; why let you not
The dagger take its course? then all these broils
Would have been ended; then, released from doubt,
And free from blame, I should be now at rest
In my still, peaceful grave. In very sooth
I'm weary of my life, and of my crown.
If Heaven decree that one of us two queens
Must perish, to secure the other's life —
And sure it must be so — why should not I
Be she who yields? My people must decide;
I give them back the sovereignty they gave.
God is my witness that I have not lived
For my own sake, but for my people's welfare.
If they expect from this false, fawning Stuart,
The younger sovereign, more happy days,
I will descend with pleasure from the throne,
Again repair to Woodstock's quiet bowers,
Where once I spent my unambitious youth;
Where far removed from all the vanities
Of earthly power, I found within myself
True majesty. I am not made to rule —
A ruler should be made of sterner stuff:
My heart is soft and tender. I have governed
These many years this kingdom happily,
But then I only needed to make happy:
Now, comes my first important regal duty,
And now I feel how weak a thing I am.

BUR. Now by mine honor, when I hear my queen,
My royal liege, speak such unroyal words,
I should betray my office, should betray
My country, were I longer to be silent.
You say you love your people 'bove yourself,
Now prove it. Choose not peace for your own heart,
And leave your kingdom to the storms of discord.
Think on the church. Shall, with this papist queen
The ancient superstition be renewed?
The monk resume his sway, the Roman legate
In pomp march hither; lock our churches up,
Dethrone our monarchs? I demand of you
The souls of all your subjects — as you now

Shall act, they all are saved, or all are lost!
Here is no time for mercy;—to promote
Your people's welfare is your highest duty.
If Shrewsbury has saved your life, then I
Will save both you and England — that is more!

ELIZ. I would be left alone. No consolation,
No counsel can be drawn from human aid
In this conjecture: — I will lay my doubts
Before the Judge of all: — I am resolved
To act as He shall teach. Withdraw, my lords.
[*To* DAVISON, *who lays the paper on the table.*
You, sir, remain in waiting — close at hand.

[*The lords withdraw;* SHREWSBURY *alone stands for a few moments before the* QUEEN, *regards her significantly, then withdraws slowly, and with an expression of the deepest anguish.*

SCENE X.

ELIZABETH *alone.*

Oh! servitude of popularity!
Disgraceful slavery! How weary am I
Of flattering this idol, which my soul
Despises in its inmost depth! Oh! when
Shall I once more be free upon this throne?
I must respect the people's voice, and strive
To win the favor of the multitude,
And please the fancies of a mob, whom naught
But jugglers' tricks delight. O call not him
A king who needs must please the world: 'tis he
Alone, who in his actions does not heed
The fickle approbation of mankind.
Have I then practised justice, all my life
Shunned each despotic deed; have I done this
Only to bind my hands against this first,
This necessary act of violence?
My own example now condemns myself!
Had I but been a tyrant, like my sister,
My predecessor, I could fearless then
Have shed this royal blood: — but am I now
Just by my own free choice? No — I was forced

By stern necessity to use this virtue;
Necessity, which binds e'en monarch's wills.
Surrounded by my foes, my people's love
Alone supports me on my envied throne.
All Europe's powers confederate to destroy me;
The pope's inveterate decree declares me
Accursed and excommunicated. France
Betrays me with a kiss, and Spain prepares
At sea a fierce exterminating war;
Thus stand I, in contention with the world,
A poor defenceless woman: I must seek
To veil the spot in my imperial birth,
By which my father cast disgrace upon me:
In vain with princely virtues would I hide it;
The envious hatred of my enemies
Uncovers it, and places Mary Stuart,
A threatening fiend, before me evermore!
[*Walking up and down, with quick and agitated steps.*
Oh, no! this fear must end. Her head must fall!
I will have peace. She is the very fury
Of my existence; a tormenting demon,
Which destiny has fastened on my soul.
Wherever I had planted me a comfort,
A flattering hope, my way was ever crossed
By this infernal viper! She has torn
My favorite, and my destined bridegroom from me.
The hated name of every ill I feel
Is Mary Stuart — were but she no more
On earth I should be free as mountain air.
[*Standing still.*
With what disdain did she look down on me,
As if her eye should blast me like the lightning!
Poor feeble wretch! I bear far other arms,
Their touch is mortal, and thou art no more.
[*Advancing to the table hastily, and taking the pen.*
I am a bastard, am I? Hapless wretch,
I am but so the while thou liv'st and breath'st.
Thy death will make my birth legitimate.
The moment I destroy thee is the doubt
Destroyed which hangs o'er my imperial right.

As soon as England has no other choice,
My mother's honor and my birthright triumphs!
[*She signs with resolution; lets her pen then fall, and steps back with an expression of terror. After a pause she rings.*

Scene XI.

Elizabeth, Davison.

Eliz. Where are their lordships?
Davison. They are gone to quell
The tumult of the people. The alarm
Was instantly appeased when they beheld
The Earl of Shrewsbury. That's he! exclaimed
A hundred voices — that's the man — he saved
The queen; hear him — the bravest man in England!
And now began the gallant Talbot, blamed
In gentle words the people's violence,
And used such strong, persuasive eloquence,
That all were pacified, and silently
They slunk away.
Elizabeth. The fickle multitude!
Which turns with every wind. Unhappy he
Who leans upon this reed! 'Tis well, Sir William;
You may retire again ——
[*As he is going towards the door.*
And, sir, this paper,
Receive it back; I place it in your hands.
Davison (*casts a look upon the paper, and starts back.*)
My gracious queen — thy name! 'tis then decided.
Eliz. I had but to subscribe it — I have done so —
A paper sure cannot decide — a name
Kills not.
Davison. Thy name, my queen, beneath this paper
Is most decisive — kills — 'tis like the lightning,
Which blasteth as it flies! This fatal scroll
Commands the sheriff and commissioners
To take departure straight for Fotheringay,
And to the Queen of Scots announce her death,
Which must at dawn be put in execution.
There is no respite, no discretion here.

As soon as I have parted with this writ
Her race is run.

ELIZABETH. Yes, sir, the Lord has placed
This weighty business in your feeble hands;
Seek him in prayer to light you with his wisdom;
I go — and leave you, sir, to do your duty. [*Going.*

DAV. No; leave me not, my queen, till I have heard
Your will. The only wisdom that I need
Is, word for word, to follow your commands.
Say, have you placed this warrant in my hands
To see that it be speedily enforced?

ELIZ. That you must do as your own prudence dictates.

DAVISON (*interrupting her quickly, and alarmed*).
Not mine — oh, God forbid! Obedience is
My only prudence here. No point must now
Be left to be decided by your servant.
A small mistake would here be regicide,
A monstrous crime, from which my soul recoils
Permit me, in this weighty act, to be
Your passive instrument, without a will: —
Tell me in plain, undoubted terms your pleasure,
What with the bloody mandate I should do.

ELIZ. Its name declares its meaning.

DAVISON. Do you, then,
My liege, command its instant execution?

ELIZ. I said not that; I tremble but to think it.

DAV. Shall I retain it, then, 'till further orders?

ELIZ. At your own risk; you answer the event.

DAV. Ye gracious heavens! Oh, speak, my queen, your pleasure!

ELIZ. My pleasure is that this unhappy business
Be no more mentioned to me; that at last
I may be freed from it, and that forever.

DAV. It costs you but a word — determine then
What shall I do with this mysterious scroll?

ELIZ. I have declared it, plague me, sir, no longer.

DAV. You have declared it, say you? Oh, my queen,
You have said nothing. Please, my gracious mistress,
But to remember ——

ELIZABETH (*stamps on the ground*).
Insupportable!

DAV. Oh, be indulgent to me! I have entered
Unwittingly, not many months ago,
Upon this office; I know not the language
Of courts and kings. I ever have been reared
In simple, open wise, a plain blunt man.
Be patient with me; nor deny your servant
A light to lead him clearly to his duty.

[*He approaches her in a supplicating posture, she turns her back on him; he stands in despair; then speaks with a tone of resolution.*

Take, take again this paper — take it back!
Within my hands it is a glowing fire.
Select not me, my queen; select not me
To serve you in this terrible conjecture.

ELIZ. Go, sir; — fulfil the duty of your office. [*Exit.*

SCENE XII.

DAVISON, *then* BURLEIGH.

DAV. She goes! She leaves me doubting and perplexed
With this dread paper! How to act I know not;
Should I retain it, should I forward it?
[*To* BURLEIGH, *who enters.*
Oh! I am glad that you are come, my lord,
'Tis you who have preferred me to this charge;
Now free me from it, for I undertook it,
Unknowing how responsible it made me.
Let me then seek again the obscurity
In which you found me; this is not my place,

BUR. How now? Take courage, sir! Where is the warrant?
The queen was with you.

DAVISON. She has quitted me
In bitter anger. Oh, advise me, help me,
Save me from this fell agony of doubt!
My lord, here is the warrant: it is signed!

BUR. Indeed! Oh, give it, give it me!

DAVISON. I may not.

BUR. How!

DAV. She has not yet explained her final will.
BUR. Explained! She has subscribed it; — give it to me.
DAV. I am to execute it, and I am not.
Great heavens! I know not what I am to do!
BURLEIGH (*urging more violently*).
It must be now, this moment, executed.
The warrant, sir. You're lost if you delay.
DAV. So am I also if I act too rashly.
BUR. What strange infatuation. Give it me.
[*Snatches the paper from him, and exit with it.*
DAV. What would you? Hold? You will be my destruction.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Scene the same as in the First Act.

HANNAH KENNEDY *in deep mourning, her eyes still red from weeping, in great but quiet anguish, is employed in sealing letters and parcels. Her sorrow often interrupts her occupation, and she is seen at such intervals to pray in silence.* PAULET *and* DRURY, *also in mourning, enter, followed by many servants, who bear golden and silver vessels, mirrors, paintings, and other valuables, and fill the back part of the stage with them.* PAULET *delivers to the* NURSE *a box of jewels and a paper, and seems to inform her by signs that it contains the inventory of the effects the* QUEEN *had brought with her. At the sight of these riches, the anguish of the* NURSE *is renewed; she sinks into a deep, glowing melancholy, during which* DRURY, PAULET, *and the servants silently retire.*

MELVIL *enters.*

KENNEDY (*screams aloud as soon as she observes him*).
Melvil! Is it you? Behold I you again?
MEL. Yes, faithful Kennedy, we meet once more.
KEN. After this long, long, painful separation!
MEL. A most unhappy, bitter meeting this!
KEN. You come ——

MELVIL. To take an everlasting leave
Of my dear queen — to bid a last farewell!
KEN. And now at length, now on the fatal morn
Which brings her death, they grant our royal lady
The presence of her friends. Oh, worthy sir,
I will not question you, how you have fared,
Nor tell you all the sufferings we've endured,
Since you were torn away from us: alas!
There will be time enough for that hereafter.
O, Melvil, Melvil, why was it our fate
To see the dawn of this unhappy day?
MEL. Let us not melt each other with our grief.
Throughout my whole remaining life, as long
As ever it may be, I'll sit and weep;
A smile shall never more light up these cheeks,
Ne'er will I lay this sable garb aside,
But lead henceforth a life of endless mourning.
Yet on this last sad day I will be firm;
Pledge me your word to moderate your grief;
And when the rest of comfort all bereft,
Abandoned to despair, wail round her, we
Will lead her with heroic resolution,
And be her staff upon the road to death!
KEN. Melvil! You are deceived if you suppose
The queen has need of our support to meet
Her death with firmness. She it is, my friend,
Who will exhibit the undaunted heart.
Oh! trust me, Mary Stuart will expire
As best becomes a heroine and queen!
MEL. Received she firmly, then, the sad decree
Of death? — 'tis said that she was not prepared.
KEN. She was not; yet they were far other terrors
Which made our lady shudder: 'twas not death,
But her deliverer, which made her tremble.
Freedom was promised us; this very night
Had Mortimer engaged to bear us hence:
And thus the queen, perplexed 'twixt hope and fear,
And doubting still if she should trust her honor
And royal person to the adventurous youth,
Sat waiting for the morning. On a sudden
We hear a boisterous tumult in the castle;

Our ears are startled by repeated blows
Of many hammers, and we think we hear
The approach of our deliverers: hope salutes us,
And suddenly and unresisted wakes
The sweet desire of life. And now at once
The portals are thrown open — it is Paulet,
Who comes to tell us — that — the carpenters
Erect beneath our feet the murderous scaffold!
[*She turns aside, overpowered by excessive anguish.*

MEL. O God in Heaven! Oh, tell me then how bore
The queen this terrible vicissitude?

KENNEDY (*after a pause, in which she has somewhat collected herself*).
Not by degrees can we relinquish life;
Quick, sudden, in the twinkling of an eye,
The separation must be made, the change
From temporal to eternal life; and God
Imparted to our mistress at this moment
His grace, to cast away each earthly hope,
And firm and full of faith to mount the skies.
No sign of pallid fear dishonored her;
No word of mourning, 'till she heard the tidings
Of Leicester's shameful treachery, the sad fate
Of the deserving youth, who sacrificed
Himself for her; the deep, the bitter anguish
Of that old knight, who lost, through her, his last,
His only hope; till then she shed no tear —
'Twas then her tears began to flow, 'twas not
Her own, but others' woe which wrung them from her.

MEL. Where is she now? Can you not lead me to her?

KEN. She spent the last remainder of the night
In prayer, and from her dearest friends she took
Her last farewell in writing: then she wrote
Her will * with her own hand. She now enjoys
A moment of repose, the latest slumber
Refreshes her weak spirits.

MELVIL. Who attends her?

KEN. None but her women and physician Burgoyn:
You seem to look around you with surprise;

* The document is now in the British Museum.

Your eyes appear to ask me what should mean
This show of splendor in the house of death.
Oh, sir, while yet we lived we suffered want;
But at our death plenty returns to us.

Scene II.

Enter Margaret Curl.

Ken. How, madam, fares the queen? Is she awake?
Curl (*drying her tears*).
She is already dressed — she asks for you.
Ken. I go: —
[*To* Melvil, *who seems to wish to accompany her*
But follow not until the queen
Has been prepared to see you. [*Exit.*
Curl. Melvil, sure,
The ancient steward?
Melvil. Yes, the same.
Curl. Oh, sir,
This is a house which needs no steward now!
Melvil, you come from London; can you give
No tidings of my husband?
Melvil. It is said
He will be set at liberty as soon ——
Curl. As soon as our dear queen shall be no more.
Oh, the unworthy, the disgraceful traitor!
He is our lady's murderer — 'tis said
It was his testimony which condemned her.
Mel. 'Tis true.
Curl. Oh, curse upon him! be his soul
Condemned forever! he has borne false witness.
Mel. Think, madam, what you say.
Curl. I will maintain it
With every sacred oath before the court,
I will repeat it in his very face;
The world shall hear of nothing else. I say
That she dies innocent!
Melvil. God grant it true!

Scene III.

Enter Hannah Kennedy.

Kennedy (*to* Curl).
Go, madam, and require a cup of wine —
'Tis for our lady.
Melvil. Is the queen then sick?
Ken. She thinks that she is strong; she is deceived
By her heroic courage; she believes
She has no need of nourishment; yet still
A hard and painful task's allotted her.
Her enemies shall not enjoy the triumph;
They shall not say that fear hath blanched her cheeks
When her fatigues have conquered human weakness.
Mel. May I approach her?
Kennedy. She will come herself.

Scene IV.

Enter Burgoyn; *two women of the chamber follow him, weeping, and in deep mourning.*

Burg. Oh, Melvil!
Melvil. Oh, Burgoyn! [*They embrace silently.*
First Woman (*to the* Nurse). She chose to be
Alone: she wishes, at this awful moment,
For the last time, to commune with her God.

Scene V.

Enter Margaret Curl, *bearing a golden cup of wine; she places it hastily upon the table, and leans, pale and trembling, against a chair.*

Mel. How, madam! What has frightened you?
Kennedy. Oh God!
Burg. Speak, madam!
Curl. What, alas! have I beheld!
Mel. Come to yourself, and say what you have seen!
Curl. As I went down the staircase which conducts
To the great hall below, a door stood open;
I looked into the chamber, and I saw —
Oh heaven!

MELVIL. What saw you?
CURL. All the walls were hung
With black; a spacious scaffold, too, o'erspread
With sable cloth, was raised above the floor,
And in the middle of the scaffold stood
A dreadful sable block! upon it lay
A naked, polished axe:—the hall was full
Of cruel people, crowding round the scaffold
Who, with a horrid thirst for human blood,
Seemed waiting for the victim!
THE WOMEN. Gracious heaven,
Protect our queen!
MELVIL. Be calm; the queen approaches.

SCENE VI.

Enter MARY *in white and sumptuously arrayed, as for a festival: she wears hanging from her neck, on a row of small beads, an Agnus Dei; a rosary hangs from her girdle; she bears a crucifix in her hand, and a diadem of precious stones binds her hair; her large black veil is thrown back. On her entrance all present fall back on both sides with the most violent expressions of anguish.* MELVIL *falls involuntarily upon his knees.*

MARY (*with quiet majesty, looking round the whole circle*).
Why these complaints? Why weep ye? Ye should rather
Rejoice with me, that now at length the end
Of my long woe approaches; that my shackles
Fall off, my prison opens, and my soul
Delighted mounts on seraph's wings, and seeks
The land of everlasting liberty.
When I was offered up to the oppression
Of my proud enemy, was forced to suffer
Ignoble taunts, and insults most unfitting
A free and sovereign queen, then was the time
To weep for me; but as an earnest friend,
Beneficent and healing death approaches.
All the indignities which I have suffered

On earth are covered by his sable wings.
The most degraded criminal's ennobled
By his last sufferings, by his final exit;
I feel again the crown upon my brows.
And dignity possess my swelling soul!
[*Advancing a few steps.*
How! Melvil here! My worthy sir, not so;
Arise; you rather come in time to see
The triumph of your mistress than her death.
One comfort, which I never had expected,
Is granted me, that after death my name
Will not be quite abandoned to my foes;
One friend at least, one partner of my faith,
Will be my witness in the hour of death.
Say, honest Melvil, how you fared the while
In this inhospitable, hostile land?
For since the time they tore you from my side
My fears for you have oft depressed my soul.

MEL. No other evil galled me but my grief
For thee, and that I wanted power to serve thee.

MARY. How fares my chamberlain, old Didier?
But sure the faithful servant long has slept
The sleep of death, for he was full of years.

MEL. God hath not granted him as yet this grace;
He lives to see the grave o'erwhelm thy youth.

MARY. Oh! could I but have felt before my death,
The happiness of pressing one descendant
Of the dear blood of Stuart to my bosom.
But I must suffer in a foreign land,
None but my servants to bewail my fate!
Sir; to your loyal bosom I commit
My latest wishes. Bear then, sir, my blessing
To the most Christian king, my royal brother,
And the whole royal family of France.
I bless the cardinal, my honored uncle,
And also Henry Guise, my noble cousin.
I bless the holy father, the vicegerent
Of Christ on earth, who will, I trust, bless me.
I bless the King of Spain, who nobly offered
Himself as my deliverer, my avenger.
They are remembered in my will: I hope

That they will not despise, how poor soe'er
They be, the presents of a heart which loves them.
[*Turning to her servants.*
I have bequeathed you to my royal brother
Of France; he will protect you, he will give you
Another country, and a better home;
And if my last desire have any weight,
Stay not in England; let no haughty Briton
Glut his proud heart with your calamities,
Nor see those in the dust who once were mine.
Swear by this image of our suffering Lord
To leave this fatal land when I'm no more.

MELVIL (*touching the crucifix*).
I swear obedience in the name of all.

MARY. What I, though poor and plundered, still possess,
Of which I am allowed to make disposal,
Shall be amongst you shared; for I have hope
In this at least my will may be fulfilled.
And what I wear upon my way to death
Is yours — nor envy me on this occasion
The pomp of earth upon the road to heaven.
[*To the ladies of her chamber.*
To you, my Alice, Gertrude, Rosamund,
I leave my pearls, my garments: you are young,
And ornament may still delight your hearts.
You, Margaret, possess the nearest claims,
To you I should be generous: for I leave you
The most unhappy woman of them all.
That I have not avenged your husband's fault
On you I hope my legacy will prove.
The worth of gold, my Hannah, charms not thee;
Nor the magnificence of precious stones:
My memory, I know, will be to thee
The dearest jewel; take this handkerchief,
I worked it for thee, in the hours of sorrow,
With my own hands, and my hot, scalding tears
Are woven in the texture: — you will bind
My eyes with this, when it is time: this last
Sad service I would wish but from my Hannah.

KEN. O Melvil! I cannot support it.

MARY. Come,
Come all and now receive my last farewell.
[*She stretches forth her hands; the* WOMEN *violently weeping, fall successively at her feet, and kiss her outstretched hand.*
Margaret, farewell — my Alice, fare thee well;
Thanks, Burgoyn, for thy honest, faithful service —
Thy lips are hot, my Gertrude: — I have been
Much hated, yet have been as much beloved.
May a deserving husband bless my Gertrude,
For this warm, glowing heart is formed for love.
Bertha, thy choice is better, thou hadst rather
Become the chaste and pious bride of heaven;
Oh! haste thee to fulfil thy vows; the goods
Of earth are all deceitful; thou may'st learn
This lesson from thy queen. No more; farewell,
Farewell, farewell, my friends, farewell for ever.
[*She turns suddenly from them; all but* MELVIL *retire at different sides.*

SCENE VII.

MARY, MELVIL.

MARY (*after the others are all gone*).
I have arranged all temporal concerns,
And hope to leave the world in debt to none;
Melvil, one thought alone there is which binds
My troubled soul, nor suffers it to fly
Delighted and at liberty to heaven.
MEL. Disclose it to me; ease your bosom, trust
Your doubts, your sorrows, to your faithful friend.
MARY. I see eternity's abyss before me; —
Soon must I stand before the highest Judge,
And have not yet appeased the Holy One.
A priest of my religion is denied me,
And I disdain to take the sacrament,
The holy, heavenly nourishment, from priests
Of a false faith; I die in the belief
Of my own church, for that alone can save.
MEL. Compose your heart; the fervent, pious wish
Is prized in heaven as high as the performance.

The might of tyrants can but bind the hands,
The heart's devotion rises free to God,
The word is dead — 'tis faith which brings to life.

MARY. The heart is not sufficient of itself;
Our faith must have some earthly pledge to ground
Its claim to the high bliss of heaven. For this
Our God became incarnate, and enclosed
Mysteriously his unseen heavenly grace
Within an outward figure of a body.
The church it is, the holy one, the high one,
Which rears for us the ladder up to heaven: —
'Tis called the Catholic Apostolic church, —
For 'tis but general faith can strengthen faith;
Where thousands worship and adore the heat
Breaks out in flame, and, borne on eagle wings,
The soul mounts upwards to the heaven of heavens.
Ah! happy they, who for the glad communion
Of pious prayer meet in the house of God!
The altar is adorned, the tapers blaze,
The bell invites, the incense soars on high;
The bishop stands enrobed, he takes the cup,
And blessing it declares the solemn mystery,
The transformation of the elements;
And the believing people fall delighted
To worship and adore the present Godhead.
Alas! I only am debarred from this;
The heavenly benediction pierces not
My prison walls: its comfort is denied me.

MEL. Yes! it can pierce them — put thy trust in Him
Who is almighty — in the hand of faith,
The withered staff can send forth verdant branches
And he who from the rock called living water,
He can prepare an altar in this prison,
Can change ——

[*Seizing the cup, which stands upon the table.*
The earthly contents of this cup
Into a substance of celestial grace.

MARY. Melvil! Oh, yes, I understand you, Melvil!
Here is no priest, no church, no sacrament;
But the Redeemer says, "When two or three
Are in my name assembled, I am with them,"

What consecrates the priest? Say, what ordains him
To be the Lord's interpreter? a heart
Devoid of guile, and a reproachless conduct.
Well, then, though unordained, be you my priest;
To you will I confide my last confession,
And take my absolution from your lips.

MEL. If then thy heart be with such zeal inflamed,
I tell thee that for thine especial comfort,
The Lord may work a miracle. Thou say'st
Here is no priest, no church, no sacrament —
Thou err'st — here is a priest — here is a God;
A God descends to thee in real presence.

[*At these words he uncovers his head, and shows a host in a golden vessel.*

I am a priest — to hear thy last confession,
And to announce to thee the peace of God
Upon thy way to death. I have received
Upon my head the seven consecrations.
I bring thee, from his Holiness, this host,
Which, for thy use, himself has deigned to bless.

MARY. Is then a heavenly happiness prepared
To cheer me on the very verge of death?
As an immortal one on golden clouds
Descends, as once the angel from on high,
Delivered the apostle from his fetters: —
He scorns all bars, he scorns the soldier's sword,
He steps undaunted through the bolted portals,
And fills the dungeon with his native glory;
Thus here the messenger of heaven appears
When every earthly champion had deceived me.
And you, my servant once, are now the servant
Of the Most High, and his immortal Word!
As before me your knees were wont to bend,
Before you humbled, now I kiss the dust.

[*She sinks before him on her knees*

MELVIL (*making over her the sign of the cross*).
Hear, Mary, Queen of Scotland: — in the name
Of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Hast thou examined carefully thy heart,
Swearest thou, art thou prepared in thy confession
To speak the truth before the God of truth?

MARY. Before my God and thee, my heart lies open.
MEL. What calls thee to the presence of the Highest?
MARY. I humbly do acknowledge to have erred
Most grievously, I tremble to approach,
Sullied with sin, the God of purity.
MEL. Declare the sin which weighs so heavily
Upon thy conscience since thy last confession.
MARY. My heart was filled with thoughts of envious hate,
And vengeance took possession of my bosom.
I hope forgiveness of my sins from God,
Yet could I not forgive my enemy.
MEL. Repentest thou of the sin? Art thou, in sooth,
Resolved to leave this world at peace with all?
MARY. As surely as I wish the joys of heaven.
MEL. What other sin hath armed thy heart against thee?
MARY. Ah! not alone through hate; through lawless love
Have I still more abused the sovereign good.
My heart was vainly turned towards the man
Who left me in misfortune, who deceived me.
MEL. Repentest thou of the sin? And hast thou turned
Thy heart, from this idolatry, to God?
MARY. It was the hardest trial I have passed;
This last of earthly bonds is torn asunder.
MEL. What other sin disturbs thy guilty conscience?
MARY. A bloody crime, indeed of ancient date,
And long ago confessed; yet with new terrors
It now attacks me, black and grisly steps
Across my path, and shuts the gates of heaven:
By my connivance fell the king, my husband —
I gave my hand and heart to a seducer —
By rigid penance I have made atonement;
Yet in my soul the worm is gnawing still.
MEL. Has then thy heart no other accusation,
Which hath not been confessed and washed away?
MARY. All you have heard with which my heart is charged.
MEL. Think on the presence of Omniscience;
Think on the punishments with which the church
Threatens imperfect and reserved confessions!

This is the sin to everlasting death,
For this is sinning 'gainst his Holy Spirit.

MARY. So may eternal grace with victory
Crown my last contest, as I wittingly
Have nothing hid ——

MELVIL. How? Wilt thou then conceal
The crime from God for which thou art condemned?
Thou tell'st me nothing of the share thou hadst
In Babington and Parry's bloody treason:
Thou diest for this a temporal death; for this
Wilt thou, too, die the everlasting death?

MARY. I am prepared to meet eternity;
Within the narrow limits of an hour
I shall appear before my Judge's throne
But, I repeat it, my confession's ended.

MEL. Consider well — the heart is a deceiver.
Thou hast, perhaps, with sly equivocation,
The word avoided, which would make thee guilty
Although thy will was party to the crime.
Remember, that no juggler's tricks can blind
The eye of fire which darts through every breast.

MARY. 'Tis true that I have called upon all princes
To free me from unworthy chains; yet 'tis
As true that, neither by intent or deed,
Have I attempted my oppressor's life.

MEL. Your secretaries then have witnessed falsely.

MARY. It is as I have said; — what they have witnessed
The Lord will judge.

MELVIL. Thou mountest, then, satisfied
Of thy own innocence, the fatal scaffold?

MARY. God suffers me in mercy to atone,
By undeserved death, my youth's transgressions.

MELVIL (*making over her the sign of the cross*)
Go, then, and expiate them all by death;
Sink a devoted victim on the altar,
Thus shall thy blood atone the blood thou'st spilt.
From female frailty were derived thy faults,
Free from the weakness of mortality,
The spotless spirit seeks the blest abodes.
Now, then, by the authority which God

Hath unto me committed, I absolve thee
From all thy sins; be as thy faith thy welfare!
[*He gives her the host.*
Receive the body which for thee was offered —
[*He takes the cup which stands upon the table, consecrates it with silent prayer, then presents it to her; she hesitates to take it, and makes signs to him to withdraw it.*
Receive the blood which for thy sins was shed
Receive it; 'tis allowed thee by the pope
To exercise in death the highest office
Of kings, the holy office of the priesthood.
[*She takes the cup.*
And as thou now, in this his earthly body
Hast held with God mysterious communion,
So may'st thou henceforth, in his realm of joy,
Where sin no more exists, nor tears of woe,
A fair, transfigured spirit, join thyself
Forever with the Godhead, and forever.
[*He sets down the cup; hearing a noise, he covers his head, and goes to the door;* MARY *remains in silent devotion on her knees.*

MELVIL (*returning*). A painful conflict is in store for thee.
Feel'st thou within thee strength enough to smother
Each impulse of malignity and hate?

MARY. I fear not a relapse. I have to God
Devoted both my hatred and my love.

MEL. Well, then, prepare thee to receive my Lords
Of Leicester and of Burleigh. They are here.

SCENE VIII.

Enter BURLEIGH, LEICESTER, *and* PAULET.

[LEICESTER *remains in the background, without raising his eyes;* BURLEIGH, *who remarks his confusion, steps between him and the* QUEEN.

BUR. I come, my Lady Stuart, to receive
Your last commands and wishes.

MARY. Thanks, my lord.

BUR. It is the pleasure of my royal mistress
That nothing reasonable be denied you.

MARY. My will, my lord, declares my last desires;
I've placed it in the hand of Sir Amias,
And humbly beg that it may be fulfilled.
PAUL. You may rely on this.
MARY. I beg that all
My servants unmolested may return
To France, or Scotland, as their wishes lead.
BUR. It shall be as you wish.
MARY. And since my body
Is not to rest in consecrated ground,
I pray you suffer this my faithful servant
To bear my heart to France, to my relations —
Alas! 'twas ever there.
BURLEIGH. It shall be done.
What wishes else?
MARY. Unto her majesty
Of England bear a sister's salutation;
Tell her that from the bottom of my heart
I pardon her my death; most humbly, too,
I crave her to forgive me for the passion
With which I spoke to her. May God preserve her
And bless her with a long and prosperous reign.
BUR. Say, do you still adhere to your resolve,
And still refuse assistance from the dean?
MARY. My lord, I've made my peace with God.
[*To* PAULET. Good sir,
I have unwittingly caused you much sorrow,
Bereft you of your age's only stay.
Oh, let me hope you do not hate my name.
PAULET (*giving her his hand*).
The Lord be with you! Go your way in peace.

SCENE IX.

HANNAH KENNEDY, *and the other women of the* QUEEN *crowd into the room with marks of horror. The* SHERIFF *follows them, a white staff in his hand; behind are seen, through the open doors, men under arms.*

MARY. What ails thee, Hannah? Yes, my hour is come.
The sheriff comes to lead me to my fate,
And part we must. Farewell!

KENNEDY *and* CURL. We will not leave thee,
We will not part from thee.
MARY (*to* MELVIL). You, worthy sir,
And my dear, faithful Hannah, shall attend me
In my last moments. I am sure, my lord
Will not refuse my heart this consolation.
BUR. For this I have no warrant.
MARY. How, my lord;
Can you deny me, then, this small petition?
Respect my sex; who shall attend me else,
And yield me the last service? Sure, it never
Can be my sister's pleasure that in me
My sex should be insulted; that these men
With their rude hands should touch my royal person.
BUR. 'Tis ordered that no woman shall ascend
The scaffold steps with you. Their tears and moans ——
MARY. She shall not weep, my lord; she shall not moan;
I answer for my Hannah's resolution;
Be merciful; divide me not so soon
From my true foster-mother, from my friend.
She bore me on her arms into this life;
Let her then gently lead me to my death.
PAULET (*to* BURLEIGH).
Yield to her wishes.
BURLEIGH. Be it so.
MARY. I now
Have nothing in this world to wish for more.
[*She takes the crucifix, and kisses it.*
My God! My Comforter! My blest Redeemer!
As once thy arms were stretched upon the cross,
Let them be now extended to receive me!
[*She turns round to go; at the same moment her eyes fall upon* LEICESTER, *who, on her going, starts involuntarily, and turns his eyes towards her; at this sight* MARY *trembles, her knees fail her, she is about to fall, when* LEICESTER *catches at her, and receives her in his arms; she regards him for some time earnestly, and in silence; he cannot support her looks; at length she speaks.*
You keep your word, my Lord of Leicester: for

You promised me your arm to lead me forth
From prison, and you lend it to me now.
At length the wished-for day is come, and what
Was oft the object of my fondest dreams
Is now accomplished: and the Earl of Leicester,
The long-expected, the long-wished-for friend,
Appears at length in Fotheringay Castle.
I see him standing in my prison; all
Is ready for the journey; all the gates
Stand open, and at length I cross the threshold,
Conducted by his hand; and now I leave
These dismal walls behind me, and forever.
All is fulfilled, and you have saved your honor.

[*He stands as if annihilated; she continues, with a gentle voice.*

Yes, Leicester; not for liberty alone
I wished to be indebted to your hands.
You should have made me bless that liberty.
Led by your hand, and happy in your love,
I hoped once more to taste the joys of life.
Yes; now that I'm prepared from all the world
To part, and to become a happy spirit,
Whom earthly inclinations tempt no more!
Now, Leicester, I may venture to confess
Without a blush the frailty I have conquered;
Farewell, my lord; and, if you can, be happy!
To woo two queens has been your daring aim;
You have disdained a tender, loving heart,
Betrayed it in the hope to win a proud one:
Kneel at the feet of Queen Elizabeth!
May your reward not prove your punishment.
Farewell; I now have nothing more on earth.

[*She goes, preceded by the* Sheriff; *at her side* Melvil *and her nurse;* Burleigh *and* Paulet *follow; the others, wailing, follow her with their eyes till she disappears; they then retire through the other two doors.*

Scene X.

Leicester (*remaining alone*).

Do I live still? Can I still bear to live?
Will not this roof fall down and bury me?

Yawns no abyss to swallow in its gulf
The veriest wretch on earth? What have I lost?
Oh, what a pearl have I not cast away!
What bliss celestial madly dashed aside!
She's gone, a spirit purged from earthly stain,
And the despair of hell remains for me!
Where is the purpose now with which I came
To stifle my heart's voice in callous scorn?
To see her head descend upon the block
With unaverted and indifferent eyes?
How doth her presence wake my slumbering shame?
Must she in death surround me with love's toils?
Lost, wretched man! No more it suits thee now
To melt away in womanly compassion:
Love's golden bliss lies not upon thy path,
Then arm thy breast in panoply of steel,
And henceforth be thy brows of adamant!
Wouldst thou not lose the guerdon of thy guilt,
Thou must uphold, complete it daringly!
Pity be dumb; mine eyes be petrified!
I'll see — I will be witness of her fall.

[*He advances with resolute steps towards the door through which* MARY *passed; but stops suddenly half way.*

No! No! The terrors of all hell possess me.
I cannot look upon the dreadful deed;
I cannot see her die! Hark! What was that?
They are already there. Beneath my feet
The bloody business is preparing. Hark!
I hear their voices. Hence! Away, away
From this abode of misery and death!

[*He attempts to escape by another door; finds it locked and returns.*

How! Does some demon chain me to this spot?
To hear what I would shudder to behold?
That voice — it is the dean's, exhorting her;
She interrupts him. Hark — she prays aloud;
Her voice is firm — now all is still, quite still!
And sobs and women's moans are all I hear.

Now, they undress her; they remove the stool;
She kneels upon the cushion; lays her head ——

[*Having spoken these last words, and paused awhile, he is seen with a convulsive motion suddenly to shrink and faint away; a confused hum of voices is heard at the same moment from below, and continues for some time.*

Scene XI.

The Second Chamber in the Fourth Act.

Elizabeth (*entering from a side door; her gait and action expressive of the most violent uneasiness.*

No message yet arrived! What! no one here!
Will evening never come! Stands the sun still
In its ethereal course? I can no more
Remain upon the rack of expectation!
Is it accomplished? Is it not? I shudder
At both events, and do not dare to ask.
My Lord of Leicester comes not, — Burleigh too,
Whom I appointed to fulfil the sentence.
If they have quitted London then 'tis done,
The bolt has left its rest — it cuts the air —
It strikes; has struck already: were my realm
At stake I could not now arrest its course.
Who's there?

Scene XII.

Enter a Page.

Elizabeth. Returned alone? Where are the lords?
Page. My Lord High-Treasurer and the Earl of Leicester?
Eliz. Where are they?
Page. They are not in London.
Eliz. No!
Where are they then?
Page. That no one could inform me;
Before the dawn, mysteriously, in haste
They quitted London.
Elizabeth (*exultingly*). I am Queen of England!
[*Walking up and down in the greatest agitation.*
Go — call me — no, remain, boy! She is dead;
Now have I room upon the earth at last.

Why do I shake? Whence comes this aguish dread?
My fears are covered by the grave; who dares
To say I did it? I have tears enough
In store to weep her fall. Are you still here?
[*To the* PAGE.
Command my secretary, Davison,
To come to me this instant. Let the Earl
Of Shrewsbury be summoned. Here he comes.
[*Exit* PAGE

SCENE XIII.

Enter SHREWSBURY.

ELIZ. Welcome, my noble lord. What tidings; say
It cannot be a trifle which hath led
Your footsteps hither at so late an hour.
SHREW. My liege, the doubts that hung upon my heart,
And dutiful concern for your fair fame,
Directed me this morning to the Tower,
Where Mary's secretaries, Nau and Curl,
Are now confined as prisoners, for I wished
Once more to put their evidence to proof.
On my arrival the lieutenant seemed
Embarrassed and perplexed; refused to show me
His prisoners; but my threats obtained admittance.
God! what a sight was there! With frantic looks,
With hair dishevelled, on his pallet lay
The Scot like one tormented by a fury.
The miserable man no sooner saw me
Than at my feet he fell, and there, with screams,
Clasping my knees, and writhing like a worm,
Implored, conjured me to acquaint him with
His sovereign's destiny, for vague reports
Had somehow reached the dungeons of the Tower
That she had been condemned to suffer death.
When I confirmed these tidings, adding, too,
That on his evidence she had been doomed, —
He started wildly up, — caught by the throat
His fellow-prisoner; with the giant strength
Of madness tore him to the ground and tried
To strangle him. No sooner had we saved
The wretch from his fierce grapple than at once

He turned his rage against himself and beat
His breast with savage fists; then cursed himself
And his companions to the depths of hell!
His evidence was false; the fatal letters
To Babington, which he had sworn were true,
He now denounced as forgeries, for he
Had set down words the queen had never spoken;
The traitor Nau had led him to this treason.
Then ran he to the casement, threw it wide
With frantic force, and cried into the street
So loud that all the people gathered round:
I am the man, Queen Mary's secretary,
The traitor who accused his mistress falsely;
I bore false witness and am cursed forever!

ELIZ. You said yourself that he had lost his wits;
A madman's words prove nothing.

SHREWSBURY. Yet this madness
Serves in itself to swell the proof. My liege,
Let me conjure thee; be not over-hasty;
Prithee, give order for a new inquiry!

ELIZ. I will, my lord, because it is your wish,
Not that I can believe my noble peers
Have in this case pronounced a hasty judgment.
To set your mind at rest the inquiry shall
Be straight renewed. Well that 'tis not too late!
Upon the honor of our royal name
No, not the shadow of a doubt shall rest.

SCENE XIV.

Enter DAVISON.

ELIZ. The sentence, sir, which I but late intrusted
Unto your keeping; where is it?

DAVISON (*in the utmost astonishment*). The sentence'

ELIZABETH (*more urgent*).
Which yesterday I gave into your charge.

DAV. Into my charge, my liege!

ELIZABETH. The people urged
And baited me to sign it. I perforce
Was driven to yield obedience to their will.
I did so; did so on extreme constraint,

And in your hands deposited the paper.
To gain time was my purpose; you remember
What then I told you. Now, the paper, sir!

SHREW. Restore it, sir, affairs have changed since then,
The inquiry must be set on foot anew.

DAV. Anew! Eternal mercy!

ELIZABETH. Why this pause,
This hesitation? Where, sir, is the paper?

DAV. I am undone! Undone! My fate is sealed!

ELIZABETH (*interrupting him violently*).
Let me not fancy, sir ——

DAVISON. Oh, I am lost!
I have it not.

ELIZABETH. How? What?

SHREWSBURY. Oh, God in heaven!

DAV. It is in Burleigh's hands — since yesterday.

ELIZ. Wretch! Is it thus you have obeyed my orders?
Did I not lay my strict injunction on you
To keep it carefully?

DAVISON. No such injunction
Was laid on me, my liege.

ELIZABETH. Give me the lie?
Opprobrious wretch! When did I order you
To give the paper into Burleigh's hands?

DAV. Never expressly in so many words.

ELIZ. And, paltering villain! dare you then presume
To construe, as you list, my words — and lay
Your bloody meaning on them? Wo betide you,
If evil come of this officious deed!
Your life shall answer the event to me.
Earl Shrewsbury, you see how my good name
Has been abused!

SHREWSBURY. I see! Oh, God in heaven!

ELIZ. What say you?

SHREWSBURY. If the knight has dared to act
In this, upon his own authority,
Without the knowledge of your majesty,
He must be cited to the Court of Peers
To answer there for subjecting thy name
To the abhorrence of all after time

Scene XV.

Enter Burleigh.

Burleigh (*bowing his knee before the* Queen).
Long life and glory to my royal mistress,
And may all enemies of her dominions
End like this Stuart.
[Shrewsbury *hides his face.* Davidson *wrings his hands in despair.*
Elizabeth. Speak, my lord; did you
From me receive the warrant?
Burleigh. No, my queen;
From Davison.
Elizabeth. And did he in my name
Deliver it?
Burleigh. No, that I cannot say.
Eliz. And dared you then to execute the writ
Thus hastily, nor wait to know my pleasure?
Just was the sentence — we are free from blame
Before the world; yet it behooved thee not
To intercept our natural clemency.
For this, my lord, I banish you my presence;
And as this forward will was yours alone
Bear you alone the curse of the misdeed! [*To* Dav.
For you, sir; who have traitorously o'erstepped
The bounds of your commission, and betrayed
A sacred pledge intrusted to your care,
A more severe tribunal is prepared:
Let him be straight conducted to the Tower,
And capital arraignments filed against him.
My honest Talbot, you alone have proved,
'Mongst all my counsellors, an upright man:
You shall henceforward be my guide — my friend.
Shrew. Oh! banish not the truest of your friends;
Nor cast those into prison, who for you
Have acted; who for you are silent now.
But suffer me, great queen, to give the seal,
Which, these twelve years, I've borne unworthily,
Back to your royal hands, and take my leave.
Elizabeth (*surprised*).
No, Shrewsbury; you surely would not now
Desert me? No; not now.

SHREWSBURY. Pardon, I am
Too old, and this right hand is growing too stiff
To set the seal upon your later deeds.
ELIZ. Will he forsake me, who has saved my life?
SHREW. 'Tis little I have done: I could not save
Your nobler part. Live — govern happily!
Your rival's dead! Henceforth you've nothing more
To fear — henceforth to nothing pay regard. [*Exit.*
ELIZABETH (*to the* EARL *of* KENT, *who enters*).
Send for the Earl of Leicester.
KENT. He desires
To be excused — he is embarked for France.
The Curtain drops.

THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CHARLES THE SEVENTH, *King of France.*
QUEEN ISABEL, *his Mother.*
AGNES SOREL.
PHILIP THE GOOD, *Duke of Burgundy.*
EARL DUNOIS, *Bastard of Orleans.*
LA HIRE, DUCHATEL, *French Officers.*
ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS.
CHATILLON, *A Burgundian Knight.*
RAOUL, *a Lotharingian Knight.*
TALBOT, *the English General,*
LIONEL, FASTOLFE, *English Officers.*
MONTGOMERY, *a Welshman.*
COUNCILLORS OF ORLEANS.
AN ENGLISH HERALD.
THIBAUT D'ARC, *a wealthy Countryman.*
MARGOT, LOUISON, JOHANNA, *his Daughters.*
ETIENNE, CLAUDE MARIE, RAIMOND, *their Suitors.*
BERTRAND, *another Countryman.*
APPARITION OF A BLACK KNIGHT.
CHARCOAL-BURNER AND HIS WIFE.
Soldiers and People, Officers of the Crown, Bishops, Monks, Marshals, Magistrates, Courtiers, and other mute persons in the Coronation Procession.

PROLOGUE.

A rural District. To the right, a Chapel with an Image of the Virgin; to the left, an ancient Oak.

SCENE I.

THIBAUT D'ARC. *His Three Daughters. Three young Shepherds, their Suitors.*

THIB. Ay, my good neighbors! we at least to-day
Are Frenchmen still, free citizens and lords
Of the old soil which our forefathers tilled.
Who knows whom we to-morrow must obey?
For England her triumphal banner waves
From every wall: the blooming fields of France
Are trampled down beneath her chargers' hoofs;
Paris hath yielded to her conquering arms,
And with the ancient crown of Dagobert

Adorns the scion of a foreign race.
Our king's descendant, disinherited,
Must steal in secret through his own domain;
While his first peer and nearest relative
Contends against him in the hostile ranks;
Ay, his unnatural mother leads them on.
Around us towns and peaceful hamlets burn.
Near and more near the devastating fire
Rolls toward these vales, which yet repose in peace.
Therefore, good neighbors, I have now resolved,
While God still grants us safety, to provide
For my three daughters; for 'midst war's alarms
Women require protection, and true love
Hath power to render lighter every load.
[*To the first Shepherd.*
Come, Etienne! You seek my Margot's hand.
Fields lying side by side and loving hearts
Promise a happy union! [*To the second.*
Claude! You're silent,
And my Louison looks upon the ground?
How, shall I separate two loving hearts
Because you have no wealth to offer me?
Who now has wealth? Our barns and homes afford
Spoil to the foe, and fuel to the fires.
In times like these a husband's faithful breast
Affords the only shelter from the storm.

LOUIS. My father!

CLAUDE MARIE. My Louison!

LOUISON (*embracing* JOHANNA). My dear sister!

THIB. I give to each a yard, a stall and herd,
And also thirty acres; and as God
Gave me his blessing, so I give you mine!

MARGOT (*embracing* JOHANNA).
Gladden our father — follow our example!
Let this day see three unions ratified!

THIB. Now go; make all things ready; for the morn
Shall see the wedding. Let our village friends
Be all assembled for the festival.
[*The two couple retire arm in arm*

Scene II.

Thibaut, Raimond, Johanna.

Thib. Thy sisters, Joan, will soon be happy brides;
I see them gladly; they rejoice my age;
But thou, my youngest, giv'st me grief and pain.
Raim. What is the matter? Why upbraid thy child?
Thib. Here is this noble youth, the flower and pride
Of all our village; he hath fixed on thee
His fond affections, and for three long years
Has wooed thee with respectful tenderness;
But thou dost thrust him back with cold reserve.
Nor is there one 'mong all our shepherd youths
Who e'er can win a gracious smile from thee.
I see thee blooming in thy youthful prime;
Thy spring it is, the joyous time of hope;
Thy person, like a tender flower, hath now
Disclosed its beauty, but I vainly wait
For love's sweet blossom genially to blow,
And ripen joyously to golden fruit!
Oh, that must ever grieve me, and betrays
Some sad deficiency in nature's work!
The heart I like not which, severe and cold,
Expands not in the genial years of youth.
Raim. Forbear, good father! Cease to urge her thus!
A noble, tender fruit of heavenly growth
Is my Johanna's love, and time alone
Bringeth the costly to maturity!
Still she delights to range among the hills,
And fears descending from the wild, free heath,
To tarry 'neath the lowly roofs of men,
Where dwell the narrow cares of humble life.
From the deep vale, with silent wonder, oft
I mark her, when, upon a lofty hill
Surrounded by her flock, erect she stands,
With noble port, and bends her earnest gaze
Down on the small domains of earth. To me
She looketh then, as if from other times
She came, foreboding things of import high.
Thib. 'Tis that precisely which displeases me!
She shuns her sisters' gay companionship;

Seeks out the desert mountains, leaves her couch
Before the crowing of the morning cock,
And in the dreadful hour, when men are wont
Confidingly to seek their fellow-men,
She, like the solitary bird, creeps forth,
And in the fearful spirit-realm of night,
To yon crossway repairs, and there alone
Holds secret commune with the mountain wind.
Wherefore this place precisely doth she choose?
Why hither always doth she drive her flock?
For hours together I have seen her sit
In dreamy musing 'neath the Druid tree,
Which every happy creature shuns with awe.
For 'tis not holy there; an evil spirit
Hath since the fearful pagan days of old
Beneath its branches fixed his dread abode.
The oldest of our villagers relate
Strange tales of horror of the Druid tree;
Mysterious voices of unearthly sound
From its unhallowed shade oft meet the ear.
Myself, when in the gloomy twilight hour
My path once chanced to lead me near this tree,
Beheld a spectral figure sitting there,
Which slowly from its long and ample robe
Stretched forth its withered hand, and beckoned me.
But on I went with speed, nor looked behind,
And to the care of God consigned my soul.

RAIMOND (*pointing to the image of the Virgin*).
Yon holy image of the Virgin blest,
Whose presence heavenly peace diffuseth round,
Not Satan's work, leadeth thy daughter here.

THIB. No! not in vain hath it in fearful dreams
And apparitions strange revealed itself.
For three successive nights I have beheld
Johanna sitting on the throne at Rheims,
A sparkling diadem of seven stars
Upon her brow, the sceptre in her hand,
From which three lilies sprung, and I, her sire,
With her two sisters, and the noble peers,
The earls, archbishops, and the king himself,
Bowed down before her. In my humble home

How could this splendor enter my poor brain?
Oh, 'tis the prelude to some fearful fall!
This warning dream, in pictured show, reveals
The vain and sinful longing of her heart.
She looks with shame upon her lowly birth.
Because with richer beauty God hath graced
Her form, and dowered her with wondrous gifts
Above the other maidens of this vale,
She in her heart indulges sinful pride,
And pride it is through which the angels fell,
By which the fiend of hell seduces man.

RAIM. Who cherishes a purer, humbler mind
Than doth thy pious daughter? Does she not
With cheerful spirit work her sisters' will?
She is more highly gifted far than they,
Yet, like a servant maiden, it is she
Who silently performs the humblest tasks.
Beneath her guiding hands prosperity
Attendeth still thy harvest and thy flocks;
And around all she does there ceaseless flows
A blessing, rare and unaccountable.

THIB. Ah truly! Unaccountable indeed!
Sad horror at this blessing seizes me!
But now no more; henceforth I will be silent.
Shall I accuse my own beloved child?
I can do naught but warn and pray for her.
Yet warn I must. Oh, shun the Druid tree!
Stay not alone, and in the midnight hour
Break not the ground for roots, no drinks prepare,
No characters inscribe upon the sand!
'Tis easy to unlock the realm of spirits;
Listening each sound, beneath a film of earth
They lay in wait, ready to rush aloft.
Stay not alone, for in the wilderness
The prince of darkness tempted e'en the Lord.

SCENE III.

THIBAUT, RAIMOND, JOHANNA.

BERTRAND *enters, a helmet in his hand.*

RAIM. Hush! here is Bertrand coming back from town;
What bears he in his hand?

BERTRAND. You look at me
With wondering gaze; no doubt you are surprised
To see this martial helm!

THIBAUT. We are indeed!
Come, tell us how you come by it? Why bring
This fearful omen to our peaceful vale?

[JOHANNA, *who has remained indifferent during the two previous scenes, becomes attentive, and steps nearer.*

BERT. I scarce can tell you how I came by it.
I had procured some tools at Vaucouleurs;
A crowd was gathered in the market-place,
For fugitives were just arrived in haste
From Orleans, bringing most disastrous news.
In tumult all the town together flocked,
And as I forced a passage through the crowds,
A brown Bohemian woman, with this helm,
Approached me, eyed me narrowly, and said:
"Fellow, you seek a helm; I know it well.
Take this one! For a trifle it is yours."
"Go with it to the soldiers," I replied,
"I am a husbandman, and want no helm."
She would not cease, however, and went on:
"None knoweth if he may not want a helm.
A roof of metal for the head just now
Is of more value than a house of stone."
Thus she pursued me closely through the streets,
Still offering the helm, which I refused.
I marked it well, and saw that it was bright,
And fair and worthy of a knightly head;
And when in doubt I weighed it in my hand,
The strangeness of the incident revolving,
The woman disappeared, for suddenly
The rushing crowd had carried her away.
And I was left the helmet in my hand.

JOHANNA (*attempting eagerly to seize it*).
Give me the helmet!

BERTRAND. Why, what boots it you?
It is not suited to a maiden's head.

JOHANNA (*seizing it from him*).
Mine is the helmet — it belongs to me!

THIB. What whim is this?
RAIMOND. Nay, let her have her way!
This warlike ornament becomes her well,
For in her bosom beats a manly heart.
Remember how she once subdued the wolf,
The savage monster which destroyed our herds,
And filled the neighb'ring shepherds with dismay.
She all alone — the lion-hearted maid —
Fought with the wolf, and from him snatched the lamb
Which he was bearing in his bloody jaws.
How brave soe'er the head this helm adorned,
It cannot grace a worthier one than hers!
THIBAUT (*to* BERTRAND).
Relate what new disasters have occurred.
What tidings brought the fugitives?
BERTRAND. May God
Have pity on our land, and save the king!
In two great battles we have lost the day;
Our foes are stationed in the heart of France,
Far as the river Loire our lands are theirs —
Now their whole force they have combined, and lay
Close siege to Orleans.
THIBAUT. God protect the king!
BERT. Artillery is brought from every side,
And as the dusky squadrons of the bees
Swarm round the hive upon a summer day,
As clouds of locusts from the sultry air
Descend and shroud the country round for miles,
So doth the cloud of war, o'er Orleans' fields,
Pour forth its many-nationed multitudes,
Whose varied speech, in wild confusion blent,
With strange and hollow murmurs fill the air.
For Burgundy, the mighty potentate,
Conducts his motley host; the Hennegarians,
The men of Liege and of Luxemburg,
The people of Namur, and those who dwell
In fair Brabant; the wealthy men of Ghent,
Who boast their velvets, and their costly silks;
The Zealanders, whose cleanly towns appear
Emerging from the ocean; Hollanders

Who milk the lowing herds; men from Utrecht,
And even from West Friesland's distant realm,
Who look towards the ice-pole — all combine,
Beneath the banner of the powerful duke,
Together to accomplish Orleans' fall.

THIB. Oh, the unblest, the lamentable strife,
Which turns the arms of France against itself!

BERT. E'en she, the mother-queen, proud Isabel —
Bavaria's haughty princess — may be seen,
Arrayed in armor, riding through the camp;
With poisonous words of irony she fires
The hostile troops to fury 'gainst her son,
Whom she hath clasped to her maternal breast.

THIB. A curse upon her, and may God prepare
For her a death like haughty Jezebel's!

BERT. The fearful Salisbury conducts the siege,
The town-destroyer; with him Lionel,
The brother of the lion; Talbot, too,
Who, with his murd'rous weapon, moweth down
The people in the battle: they have sworn,
With ruthless insolence to doom to shame
The hapless maidens, and to sacrifice
All who the sword have wielded, with the sword.
Four lofty watch-towers, to o'ertop the town,
They have upreared; Earl Salisbury from on high
Casteth abroad his cruel, murd'rous glance,
And marks the rapid wanderers in the streets.
Thousands of cannon-balls, of pond'rous weight,
Are hurled into the city. Churches lie
In ruined heaps, and Nôtre Dame's royal tower
Begins at length to bow its lofty head.
They also have formed powder-vaults below,
And thus, above a subterranean hell,
The timid city every hour expects,
'Midst crashing thunder, to break forth in flames.

[JOHANNA *listens with close attention, and places the helmet on her head.*

THIB. But where were then our heroes? Where the swords
Of Saintrailles, and La Hire, and brave Dunois,
Of France the bulwark, that the haughty foe

With such impetuous force thus onward rushed?
Where is the king? Can he supinely see
His kingdom's peril and his cities' fall?

BERT. The king at Chinon holds his court; he lacks
Soldiers to keep the field. Of what avail
The leader's courage, and the hero's arm,
When pallid fear doth paralyze the host?
A sudden panic, as if sent from God,
Unnerves the courage of the bravest men.
In vain the summons of the king resounds
As when the howling of the wolf is heard,
The sheep in terror gather side by side,
So Frenchmen, careless of their ancient fame,
Seek only now the shelter of the towns.
One knight alone, I have been told, has brought
A feeble company, and joins the king
With sixteen banners.

JOHANNA (*quickly*). What's the hero's name?

BERT. 'Tis Baudricour. But much I fear the knight
Will not be able to elude the foe,
Who track him closely with too numerous hosts.

JOHAN. Where halts the knight? Pray tell me, if you know.

BERT. About a one day's march from Vaucouleurs.

THIBAUT (*to* JOHANNA).
Why, what is that to thee? Thou dost inquire
Concerning matters which become thee not.

BERT. The foe being now so strong, and from the king
No safety to be hoped, at Vaucouleurs
They have with unanimity resolved
To yield them to the Duke of Burgundy.
Thus we avoid the foreign yoke, and still
Continue by our ancient royal line;
Ay, to the ancient crown we may fall back
Should France and Burgundy be reconciled.

JOHANNA (*as if inspired*).
Speak not of treaty! Speak not of surrender!
The savior comes, he arms him for the fight.
The fortunes of the foe before the walls
Of Orleans shall be wrecked! His hour is come,
He now is ready for the reaper's hand,

And with her sickle will the maid appear,
And mow to earth the harvest of his pride.
She from the heavens will tear his glory down,
Which he had hung aloft among the stars;
Despair not! Fly not! for ere yonder corn
Assumes its golden hue, or ere the moon
Displays her perfect orb, no English horse
Shall drink the rolling waters of the Loire.

BERT. Alas! no miracle will happen now!

JOHAN. Yes, there shall yet be one — a snow-white dove
Shall fly, and with the eagle's boldness, tear
The birds of prey which rend her fatherland.
She shall o'erthrow this haughty Burgundy,
Betrayer of the kingdom; Talbot, too,
The hundred-handed, heaven-defying scourge;
This Salisbury, who violates our fanes,
And all these island robbers shall she drive
Before her like a flock of timid lambs.
The Lord will be with her, the God of battle;
A weak and trembling creature he will choose,
And through a tender maid proclaim his power,
For he is the Almighty!

THIBAULT. What strange power
Hath seized the maiden?

RAIMOND. Doubtless 'tis the helmet
Which doth inspire her with such martial thoughts.
Look at your daughter. Mark her flashing eye,
Her glowing cheek, which kindles as with fire.

JOHAN. This realm shall fall! This ancient land of fame,
The fairest that, in his majestic course,
The eternal sun surveys — this paradise,
Which, as the apple of his eye, God loves —
Endure the fetters of a foreign yoke?
— Here were the heathen scattered, and the cross
And holy image first were planted here;
Here rest St. Louis' ashes, and from hence
The troops went forth who set Jerusalem free.

BERTRAND (*in astonishment*).
Hark how she speaks! Why, whence can she obtain

This glorious revelation? Father Arc!
A wond'rous daughter God hath given you!

JOHAN. We shall no longer serve a native prince!
The king, who never dies, shall pass away —
The guardian of the sacred plough, who fills
The earth with plenty, who protects our herds,
Who frees the bondmen from captivity,
Who gathers all his cities round his throne —
Who aids the helpless, and appals the base,
Who envies no one, for he reigns supreme;
Who is a mortal, yet an angel too,
Dispensing mercy on the hostile earth.
For the king's throne, which glitters o'er with gold,
Affords a shelter for the destitute;
Power and compassion meet together there,
The guilty tremble, but the just draw near,
And with the guardian lion fearless sport!
The stranger king, who cometh from afar,
Whose fathers' sacred ashes do not lie
Interred among us; can he love our land?
Who was not young among our youth, whose heart
Respondeth not to our familiar words,
Can he be as a father to our sons?

THIB. God save the king and France! We're peaceful folk,
Who neither wield the sword, nor rein the steed.
— Let us await the king whom victory crowns;
The fate of battle is the voice of God.
He is our lord who crowns himself at Rheims,
And on his head receives the holy oil.
— Come, now to work! come! and let every one
Think only of the duty of the hour!
Let the earth's great ones for the earth contend
Untroubled we may view the desolation,
For steadfast stand the acres which we till.
The flames consume our villages, our corn
Is trampled 'neath the tread of warlike steeds;
With the new spring new harvests reappear,
And our light huts are quickly reared again!

[*They all retire except the maiden.*

Scene IV.

Johanna (*alone*).

Farewell ye mountains, ye beloved glades,
Ye lone and peaceful valleys, fare ye well!
Through you Johanna never more may stray!
For, ay, Johanna bids you now farewell.
Ye meads which I have watered, and ye trees
Which I have planted, still in beauty bloom!
Farewell ye grottos, and ye crystal springs!
Sweet echo, vocal spirit of the vale.
Who sang'st responsive to my simple strain,
Johanna goes, and ne'er returns again.

Ye scenes where all my tranquil joys I knew,
Forever now I leave you far behind!
Poor foldless lambs, no shepherd now have you!
O'er the wide heath stray henceforth unconfined!
For I to danger's field, of crimson hue,
Am summoned hence another flock to find.
Such is to me the spirit's high behest;
No earthly, vain ambition fires my breast.

For who in glory did on Horeb's height
Descend to Moses in the bush of flame,
And bade him go and stand in Pharaoh's sight —
Who once to Israel's pious shepherd came,
And sent him forth, his champion in the fight, —
Who aye hath loved the lowly shepherd train, —
He, from these leafy boughs, thus spake to me,
"Go forth! Thou shalt on earth my witness be.

"Thou in rude armor must thy limbs invest,
A plate of steel upon thy bosom wear;
Vain earthly love may never stir thy breast,
Nor passion's sinful glow be kindled there.
Ne'er with the bride-wreath shall thy locks be dressed,
Nor on thy bosom bloom an infant fair;
But war's triumphant glory shall be thine;
Thy martial fame all women's shall outshine.

"For when in fight the stoutest hearts despair,
When direful ruin threatens France, forlorn,

Then thou aloft my oriflamme shalt bear,
And swiftly as the reaper mows the corn,
Thou shalt lay low the haughty conqueror;
His fortune's wheel thou rapidly shalt turn,
To Gaul's heroic sons deliverance bring,
Relieve beleaguered Rheims, and crown thy king!"

The heavenly spirit promised me a sign;
He sends the helmet, it hath come from him.
Its iron filleth me with strength divine,
I feel the courage of the cherubim;
As with the rushing of a mighty wind
It drives me forth to join the battle's din;
The clanging trumpets sound, the chargers rear,
And the loud war-cry thunders in mine ear.
[*She goes out.*

ACT I.

Scene I.

The royal residence at Chinon.

Dunois *and* Duchatel.

Dunois. No longer I'll endure it. I renounce
This recreant monarch who forsakes himself.
My valiant heart doth bleed, and I could rain
Hot tear-drops from mine eyes, that robber-swords
Partition thus the royal realm of France;
That cities, ancient as the monarchy,
Deliver to the foe the rusty keys,
While here in idle and inglorious ease
We lose the precious season of redemption.
Tidings of Orleans' peril reach mine ear,
Hither I sped from distant Normandy,
Thinking, arrayed in panoply of war,
To find the monarch with his marshalled hosts;
And find him — here! begirt with troubadours,
And juggling knaves, engaged in solving riddles,
And planning festivals in Sorel's honor,
As brooded o'er the land profoundest peace!

The Constable hath gone; he will not brook
Longer the spectacle of shame. I, too,
Depart, and leave him to his evil fate.

DUCH. Here comes the king.

SCENE II.

KING CHARLES. *The same.*

CHAS. The Constable hath sent us back his sword
And doth renounce our service. Now, by heaven!
He thus hath rid us of a churlish man,
Who insolently sought to lord it o'er us.

DUNOIS. A man is precious in such perilous times;
I would not deal thus lightly with his loss.

CHAS. Thou speakest thus from love of opposition;
While he was here thou never wert his friend.

DUNOIS. He was a tiresome, proud, vexatious fool,
Who never could resolve. For once, however,
He hath resolved. Betimes he goeth hence,
Where honor can no longer be achieved.

CHAS. Thou'rt in a pleasant humor; undisturbed
I'll leave thee to enjoy it. Hark, Duchatel!
Ambassadors are here from old King René,
Of tuneful songs the master, far renowned.
Let them as honored guests be entertained,
And unto each present a chain of gold.
[*To the Bastard*
Why smilest thou, Dunois?

DUNOIS. That from thy mouth
Thou shakest golden chains.

DUCHATEL. Alas! my king!
No gold existeth in thy treasury.

CHAS. Then gold must be procured. It must not be
That bards unhonored from our court depart.
'Tis they who make our barren sceptre bloom,
'Tis they who wreath around our fruitless crown
Life's joyous branch of never-fading green.
Reigning, they justly rank themselves as kings,
Of gentle wishes they erect their throne,
Their harmless realm existeth not in space;

Hence should the bard accompany the king,
Life's higher sphere the heritage of both!

DUCH. My royal liege! I sought to spare thine ear
So long as aid and counsel could be found;
Now dire necessity doth loose my tongue.
Naught hast thou now in presents to bestow,
Thou hast not wherewithal to live to-morrow!
The spring-tide of thy fortune is run out,
And lowest ebb is in thy treasury!
The soldiers, disappointed of their pay,
With sullen murmurs, threaten to retire.
My counsel faileth, not with royal splendor
But meagerly, to furnish out thy household.

CHAS. My royal customs pledge, and borrow gold
From the Lombardians.

DUCHATEL. Sire, thy revenues,
Thy royal customs are for three years pledged.

DUNOIS. And pledge meanwhile and kingdom both are lost.

CHAS. Still many rich and beauteous lands are ours.

DUNOIS. So long as God and Talbot's sword permit!
When Orleans falleth into English hands
Then with King René thou may'st tend thy sheep!

CHAS. Still at this king thou lov'st to point thy jest;
Yet 'tis this lackland monarch who to-day
Hath with a princely crown invested me.

DUNOIS. Not, in the name of heaven, with that of Naples,
Which is for sale, I hear, since he kept sheep.

CHAS. It is a sportive festival, a jest,
Wherein he giveth to his fancy play,
To found a world all innocent and pure
In this barbaric, rude reality.
Yet noble — ay, right royal is his aim!
He will again restore the golden age,
When gentle manners reigned, when faithful love
The heroic hearts of valiant knights inspired,
And noble women, whose accomplished taste
Diffuseth grace around, in judgment sat.
The old man dwelleth in those bygone times,
And in our workday world would realize
The dreams of ancient bards, who picture life

'Mid bowers celestial, throned on golden clouds,
He hath established hence a court of love
Where valiant knights may dwell, and homage yield
To noble women, who are there enthroned,
And where pure love and true may find a home.
Me he hath chosen as the prince of love.

DUNOIS. I am not such a base, degenerate churl
As love's dominion rudely to assail.
I am her son, from her derive my name,
And in her kingdom lies my heritage.
The Prince of Orleans was my sire, and while
No woman's heart was proof against his love,
No hostile fortress could withstand his shock!
Wilt thou, indeed, with honor name thyself
The prince of love — be bravest of the brave!
As I have read in those old chronicles,
Love aye went coupled with heroic deeds,
And valiant heroes, not inglorious shepherds,
So legends tell us, graced King Arthur's board.
The man whose valor is not beauty's shield
Is all unworthy of her golden prize.
Here the arena! combat for the crown,
Thy royal heritage! With knightly sword
Thy lady's honor and thy realm defend —
And hast thou with hot valor snatched the crown
From streams of hostile blood, — then is the time,
And it would well become thee as a prince,
Love's myrtle chaplet round thy brows to wreathe.

CHARLES (*to a* PAGE, *who enters*).
What is the matter?

PAGE. Senators from Orleans
Entreat an audience, sire.

CHARLES. Conduct them hither!
[PAGE *retires.*
Doubtless they succor need; what can I do,
Myself all-succorless!

SCENE III.

The same. Three SENATORS.

CHAS. Welcome, my trusty citizens of Orleans!
What tidings bring ye from my faithful town?

Doth she continue with her wonted zeal
Still bravely to withstand the leaguering foe?

SENAT. Ah, sire! the city's peril is extreme;
And giant ruin, waxing hour by hour,
Still onward strides. The bulwarks are destroyed —
The foe at each assault advantage gains;
Bare of defenders are the city walls,
For with rash valor forth our soldiers rush,
While few, alas! return to view their homes,
And famine's scourge impendeth o'er the town.
In this extremity the noble Count
Of Rochepierre, commander of the town,
Hath made a compact with the enemy,
According to old custom, to yield up,
On the twelfth day, the city to the foe,
Unless, meanwhile, before the town appear
A host of magnitude to raise the siege.

[DUNOIS *manifests the strongest indignation.*

CHAS. The interval is brief.

SENATOR. We hither come,
Attended by a hostile retinue,
To implore thee, sire, to pity thy poor town,
And to send succor ere the appointed day,
When, if still unrelieved, she must surrender.

DUNOIS. And could Saintrailles consent to give his voice
To such a shameful compact?

SENATOR. Never, sir!
Long as the hero lived, none dared to breathe
A single word of treaty or surrender.

DUNOIS. He then is dead?

SENATOR. The noble hero fell,
His monarch's cause defending on our walls.

CHAS. What! Saintrailles dead! Oh, in that single man
A host is foundered!

[*A Knight enters and speaks apart with* DUNOIS, *who starts with surprise.*

DUNOIS. That too!

CHARLES. Well? What is it?

DUNOIS. Count Douglass sendeth here. The Scottish troops

Revolt, and threaten to retire at once,
Unless their full arrears are paid to-day.

CHAS. Duchatel!

DUCHATEL (*shrugs his shoulders*).
Sire! I know not what to counsel.

CHAS. Pledge, promise all, even unto half my realm.

DUCHAT. 'Tis vain! They have been fed with hope too often!

CHAS. They are the finest troops of all my host!
They must not now, not now abandon me!

SENATOR (*throwing himself at the* KING'S *feet*).
Oh, king, assist us! Think of our distress!

CHARLES (*in despair*).
How! Can I summon armies from the earth?
Or grow a cornfield on my open palm?
Rend me in pieces! Pluck my bleeding heart
Forth from my breast, and coin it 'stead of gold!
I've blood for you, but neither coin nor troops.

[*He sees* SOREL *approach, and hastens towards her with outstretched arms.*

SCENE IV.

The same. AGNES SOREL, *a casket in her hand.*

CHAS. My Agnes! Oh, my love! my dearest life!
Thou comest here to snatch me from despair!
Refuge I take within thy loving arms;
Possessing thee I feel that naught is lost.

SOREL. My king, beloved!

[*Looking round with an anxious, inquiring gaze*
Dunois! Say, is it true,
Duchatel?

DUCHATEL. 'Tis, alas!

SOREL. So great the need?
No treasure left? The soldiers will disband?

DUCHAT. Alas! it is too true!

SOREL (*giving him the casket*). Here — here is gold,
Here too are jewels! Melt my silver down!
Sell, pledge my castles — on my fair domains
In Provence, treasure raise — turn all to gold,
Appease the troops! No time is to be lost!

[*She urges him to depart*

CHAS. Well now, Dunois! Duchatel! Do ye still
Account me poor, when I possess the crown
Of womankind? She's nobly born as I;
The royal blood of Valois not more pure;
The most exalted throne she would adorn —
Yet she rejects it with disdain, and claims
No other title than to be my love.
No gift more costly will she e'er receive
Than early flower in winter, or rare fruit!
No sacrifice on my part she permits,
Yet sacrificeth all she had to me!
With generous spirit she doth venture all
Her wealth and fortune in my sinking bark.

DUNOIS. Ay, she is mad indeed, my king, as thou;
She throws her all into a burning house,
And draweth water in the leaky vessel
Of the Danaïdes. Thee she will not save,
And in thy ruin but involve herself.

SOREL. Believe him not! Full many a time he hath
Perilled his life for thee, and now, forsooth,
Chafeth because I risk my worthless gold!
How? Have I freely sacrificed to thee
What is esteemed far more than gold and pearls,
And shall I now hold back the gifts of fortune?
Oh, come! Let my example challenge thee
To noble self-denial! Let's at once
Cast off the needless ornaments of life!
Thy courtiers metamorphose into soldiers;
Thy gold transmute to iron; all thou hast,
With resolute daring, venture for thy crown!
Peril and want we will participate!
Let us bestride the war-horse, and expose
Our tender person to the fiery glow
Of the hot sun, take for our canopy
The clouds above, and make the stones our pillow.
The rudest warrier, when he sees his king
Bear hardship and privation like the meanest
Will patiently endure his own hard lot!

CHARLES (*laughing*).
Ay! now is realized an ancient word
Of prophesy, once uttered by a nun

Of Clairmont, in prophetic mood, who said,
That through a woman's aid I o'er my foes
Should triumph, and achieve my father's crown.
Far off I sought her in the English camp;
I strove to reconcile a mother's heart;
Here stands the heroine — my guide to Rheims!
My Agnes! I shall triumph through thy love!

SOREL. Thou'lt triumph through the valiant swords of friends.

CHAS. And from my foes' dissensions much I hope —
For sure intelligence hath reached mine ear,
That 'twixt these English lords and Burgundy
Things do not stand precisely as they did;
Hence to the duke I have despatched La Hire,
To try if he can lead my angry vassal
Back to his ancient loyalty and faith:
Each moment now I look for his return.

DUCHATEL (*at the window*).
A knight e'en now dismounteth in the court.

CHAS. A welcome messenger! We soon shall learn
Whether we're doomed to conquer or to yield.

SCENE V.

The same. LA HIRE.

CHARLES (*meeting him*).
Hope bringest thou, or not? Be brief, La Hire,
Out with thy tidings! What must we expect?

HIRE. Expect naught, sire, save from thine own good sword.

CHAS. The haughty duke will not be reconciled!
Speak! How did he receive my embassy?

HIRE. His first and unconditional demand,
Ere he consent to listen to thine errand,
Is that Duchatel be delivered up,
Whom he doth name the murderer of his sire.

CHAS. This base condition we reject with scorn!

HIRE. Then be the league dissolved ere it commence!

CHAS. Hast thou thereon, as I commanded thee,
Challenged the duke to meet him in fair fight
On Montereau's bridge, whereon his father fell?

HIRE. Before him on the ground I flung thy glove,
And said: "Thou wouldst forget thy majesty,
And like a knight do battle for thy realm."
He scornfully rejoined "He needed not
To fight for that which he possessed already,
But if thou wert so eager for the fray,
Before the walls of Orleans thou wouldst find him,
Whither he purposed going on the morrow;"
Thereon he laughing turned his back upon me.
CHAS. Say, did not justice raise her sacred voice,
Within the precincts of my parliament?
HIRE. The rage of party, sire, hath silenced her.
An edict of the parliament declares
Thee and thy race excluded from the throne.
DUNOIS. These upstart burghers' haughty insolence!
CHAS. Hast thou attempted with my mother aught?
HIRE. With her?
CHARLES. Ay! How did she demean herself?
LA HIRE (*after a few moments' reflection*).
I chanced to step within St. Denis' walls
Precisely at the royal coronation.
The crowds were dressed as for a festival;
Triumphal arches rose in every street
Through which the English monarch was to pass.
The way was strewed with flowers, and with huzzas,
As France some brilliant conquest had achieved,
The people thronged around the royal car.
SOREL. They could huzza — huzza, while trampling thus
Upon a gracious sovereign's loving heart!
HIRE. I saw young Harry Lancaster — the boy —
On good St. Lewis' regal chair enthroned;
On either side his haughty uncles stood,
Bedford and Gloucester, and before him kneeled,
To render homage for his lands, Duke Philip.
CHAS. Oh, peer dishonored! Oh, unworthy cousin!
HIRE. The child was timid, and his footing lost
As up the steps he mounted towards the throne.
An evil omen! murmured forth the crowd,
And scornful laughter burst on every side.
Then forward stepped Queen Isabel — thy mother,
And — but it angers me to utter it!

CHARLES. Say on.
HIRE. Within her arms she clasped the boy,
And herself placed him on thy father's throne.
CHAS. Oh, mother! mother!
LA HIRE. E'en the murderous bands
Of the Burgundians, at this spectacle,
Evinced some tokens of indignant shame.
The queen perceived it, and addressed the crowds,
Exclaiming with loud voice: "Be grateful, Frenchmen,
That I engraft upon a sickly stock
A healthy scion, and redeem you from
The misbegotten son of a mad sire!"
[*The* KING *hides his face;* AGNES *hastens towards him and clasps him in her arms; all the bystanders express aversion and horror.*
DUNOIS. She-wolf of France! Rage-breathing Megara!
CHARLES (*after a pause, to the* SENATORS).
Yourselves have heard the posture of affairs.
Delay no longer, back return to Orleans,
And bear this message to my faithful town;
I do absolve my subjects from their oath,
Their own best interests let them now consult,
And yield them to the Duke of Burgundy;
'Yclept the Good, he need must prove humane.
DUNOIS. What say'st thou, sire? Thou wilt abandon Orleans!
SENATOR (*kneels down*).
My king! Abandon not thy faithful town!
Consign her not to England's harsh control.
She is a precious jewel in the crown,
And none hath more inviolate faith maintained
Towards the kings, thy royal ancestors.
DUNOIS. Have we been routed? Is it lawful, sire,
To leave the English masters of the field,
Without a single stroke to save the town?
And thinkest thou, with careless breath, forsooth,
Ere blood hath flowed, rashly to give away
The fairest city from the heart of France?
CHAS. Blood hath been poured forth freely, and in vain!
The hand of heaven is visibly against me;

In every battle is my host o'erthrown,
I am rejected of my parliament,
My capital, my people, hail me foe,
Those of my blood, — my nearest relatives, —
Forsake me and betray — and my own mother
Doth nurture at her breast the hostile brood.
Beyond the Loire we will retire, and yield
To the o'ermastering hand of destiny
Which sideth with the English.

SOREL. God forbid
That we in weak despair should quit this realm!
This utterance came not from thy heart, my king,
Thy noble heart, which hath been sorely riven
By the fell deed of thy unnatural mother,
Thou'lt be thyself again, right valiantly
Thou'lt battle with thine adverse destiny,
Which doth oppose thee with relentless ire.

CHARLES (*lost in gloomy thought*).
Is it not true? A dark and ominous doom
Impendeth o'er the heaven-abandoned house
Of Valois — there preside the avenging powers,
To whom a mother's crime unbarred the way.
For thirty years my sire in madness raved;
Already have three elder brothers been
Mowed down by death; 'tis the decree of heaven,
The house of the Sixth Charles is doomed to fall.

SOREL. In thee 'twill rise with renovated life!
Oh, in thyself have faith! — believe me, king,
Not vainly hath a gracious destiny
Redeemed thee from the ruin of thy house,
And by thy brethren's death exalted thee,
The youngest born, to an unlooked-for throne
Heaven in thy gentle spirit hath prepared
The leech to remedy the thousand ills
By party rage inflicted on the land.
The flames of civil discord thou wilt quench,
And my heart tells me thou'lt establish peace,
And found anew the monarchy of France.

CHAS. Not I! The rude and storm-vexed times require
A pilot formed by nature to command.
A peaceful nation I could render happy,

A wild, rebellious people not subdue.
I never with the sword could open hearts
Against me closed in hatred's cold reserve.

SOREL. The people's eye is dimmed, an error blinds them,
But this delusion will not long endure;
The day is not far distant when the love
Deep rooted in the bosom of the French,
Towards their native monarch, will revive,
Together with the ancient jealousy,
Which forms a barrier 'twixt the hostile nations.
The haughty foe precipitates his doom.
Hence, with rash haste abandon not the field,
With dauntless front contest each foot of ground,
As thine own heart defend the town of Orleans!
Let every boat be sunk beneath the wave,
Each bridge be burned, sooner than carry thee
Across the Loire, the boundary of thy realm,
The Stygian flood, o'er which there's no return.

CHAS. What could be done I have done. I have offered,
In single fight, to combat for the crown.
I was refused. In vain my people bleed,
In vain my towns are levelled with the dust.
Shall I, like that unnatural mother, see
My child in pieces severed with the sword?
No; I forego my claim, that it may live.

DUNOIS. How, sire! Is this fit language for a king?
Is a crown thus renounced? Thy meanest subject,
For his opinion's sake, his hate and love,
Sets property and life upon a cast;
When civil war hangs out her bloody flag,
Each private end is drowned in party zeal.
The husbandman forsakes his plough, the wife
Neglects her distaff; children, and old men,
Don the rude garb of war; the citizen
Consigns his town to the devouring flames,
The peasant burns the produce of his fields;
And all to injure or advantage thee,
And to achieve the purpose of his heart.
Men show no mercy, and they wish for none,

When they at honor's call maintain the fight,
Or for their idols or their gods contend.
A truce to such effeminate pity, then,
Which is not suited to a monarch's breast.
Thou didst not heedlessly provoke the war;
As it commenced, so let it spend its fury.
It is the law of destiny that nations
Should for their monarchs immolate themselves.
We Frenchmen recognize this sacred law,
Nor would annul it. Base, indeed, the nation
That for its honor ventures not its all.

CHARLES (*to the* SENATORS).

You've heard my last resolve; expect no other.
May God protect you! I can do no more.

DUNOIS. As thou dost turn thy back upon thy realm,
So may the God of battle aye avert
His visage from thee. Thou forsak'st thyself,
So I forsake thee. Not the power combined
Of England and rebellious Burgundy,
Thy own mean spirit hurls thee from the throne.
Born heroes ever were the kings of France;
Thou wert a craven, even from thy birth.

[*To the* SENATORS

The king abandons you. But I will throw
Myself into your town — my father's town —
And 'neath its ruins find a soldier's grave.

[*He is about to depart.* AGNES SOREL *detains him.*

SOREL (*to the* KING).

Oh, let him not depart in anger from thee!
Harsh words his lips have uttered, but his heart
Is true as gold. 'Tis he, himself, my king,
Who loves thee, and hath often bled for thee.
Dunois, confess, the heat of noble wrath
Made thee forget thyself; and oh, do thou
Forgive a faithful friend's o'erhasty speech!
Come, let me quickly reconcile your hearts,
Ere anger bursteth forth in quenchless flame.

[DUNOIS *looks fixedly at the* KING, *and appears t await an answer.*

CHAS. Our way lies over the Loire. Duchatel,
See all our equipage embarked.

DUNOIS (*quickly to* SOREL). Farewell.

[*He turns quickly round, and goes out. The* SENATORS *follow.*

SOREL (*wringing her hands in despair*).

Oh, if he goes, we are forsaken quite!
Follow, La Hire! Oh, seek to soften him!

[LA HIRE *goes out.*

SCENE VI.

CHARLES, SOREL, DUCHATEL.

CHAS. Is, then, the sceptre such a peerless treasure?
Is it so hard to loose it from our grasp?
Believe me, 'tis more galling to endure
The domineering rule of these proud vassals.
To be dependent on their will and pleasure
Is, to a noble heart, more bitter far
Than to submit to fate.

[*To* DUCHATEL, *who still lingers.*

Duchatel, go,
And do what I commanded.

DUCHATEL (*throws himself at the* KING'S *feet*).

Oh, my king!

CHAS. No more! Thou'st heard my absolute resolve!

DUCHATEL. Sire, with the Duke of Burgundy make peace!
'Tis the sole outlet from destruction left!

CHAS. Thou giv'st this counsel, and thy blood alone
Can ratify this peace.

DUCHATEL. Here is my head.
I oft have risked it for thee in the fight,
And with a joyful spirit I, for thee,
Would lay it down upon the block of death.
Conciliate the duke! Deliver me
To the full measure of his wrath, and let
My flowing blood appease the ancient hate.

CHARLES (*looks at him for some time in silence, and with deep emotion*).

Can it be true? Am I, then, sunk so low,
That even friends, who read my inmost heart,
Point out for my escape the path of shame?

Yes, now I recognize my abject fall.
My honor is no more confided in.

DUCHATEL. Reflect ——

CHARLES. Be silent, and incense me not!
Had I ten realms, on which to turn my back,
With my friend's life I would not purchase them.
Do what I have commanded. Hence, and see
My equipage embarked.

DUCHATEL. 'Twill speedily
Be done.

[*He stands up and retires.* AGNES SOREL *weeps passionately.*

SCENE VII.

The royal palace at Chinon.

CHARLES, AGNES SOREL.

CHARLES (*seizing the hand of* AGNES).
My Agnes, be not sorrowful!
Beyond the Loire we still shall find a France;
We are departing to a happier land,
Where laughs a milder, an unclouded sky,
And gales more genial blow; we there shall meet
More gentle manners; song abideth there,
And love and life in richer beauty bloom.

SOREL. Oh, must I contemplate this day of woe!
The king must roam in banishment! the son
Depart, an exile from his father's house,
And turn his back upon his childhood's home!
Oh, pleasant, happy land that we forsake,
Ne'er shall we tread thee joyously again.

SCENE VIII.

LA HIRE *returns*, CHARLES, SOREL.

SOREL. You come alone? You do not bring him back?
[*Observing him more closely.*
La Hire! What news? What does that look announce?
Some new calamity?

LA HIRE. Calamity
Hath spent itself; sunshine has now returned.
SOREL. What is it? I implore you.
LA HIRE (*to the* KING). Summon back
The delegates from Orleans.
CHARLES. Why? What is it?
LA HIRE. Summon them back! Thy fortune is reversed.
A battle has been fought, and thou hast conquered.
SOREL. Conquered! Oh, heavenly music of that word!
CHAS. La Hire! A fabulous report deceives thee;
Conquered! In conquest I believe no more.
LA HIRE. Still greater wonders thou wilt soon believe.
Here cometh the archbishop. To thine arms
He leadeth back Dunois.
SOREL. O beauteous flower
Of victory, which doth the heavenly fruits
Of peace and reconcilement bear at once!

SCENE IX.

The same, ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS, DUNOIS, DUCHATEL, with RAOUL, *A Knight in armor.*

ARCHBISHOP (*leading* DUNOIS *to the* KING, *and joining their hands*).
Princes, embrace! Let rage and discord cease,
Since Heaven itself hath for our cause declared.
[DUNOIS *embraces the* KING.
CHAS. Relieve my wonder and perplexity;
What may this solemn earnestness portend?
Whence this unlooked-for change of fortune?
ARCHBISHOP (*leads the* KNIGHT *forward, and presents him to the* KING). Speak!
RAOUL. We had assembled sixteen regiments
Of Lotharingian troops to join your host;
And Baudricourt, a knight of Vaucouleurs,
Was our commander. Having gained the heights
By Vermanton, we wound our downward way
Into the valley watered by the Yonne.
There, in the plain before us, lay the foe,
And when we turned, arms glittered in our rear.
We saw ourselves surrounded by two hosts,

And could not hope for conquest or for flight.
Then sank the bravest heart, and in despair
We all prepared to lay our weapons down.
The leaders with each other anxiously
Sought counsel and found none; when to our eyes
A spectacle of wonder showed itself.
For suddenly from forth the thickets' depths
A maiden, on her head a polished helm,
Like a war-goddess, issued; terrible
Yet lovely was her aspect, and her hair
In dusky ringlets round her shoulders fell.
A heavenly radiance shone around the height;
When she upraised her voice and thus addressed us:
"Why be dismayed, brave Frenchmen? On the foe!
Were they more numerous than the ocean sands,
God and the holy maiden lead you on"!
Then quickly from the standard-bearer's hand
She snatched the banner, and before our troop
With valiant bearing strode the wond'rous maid.
Silent with awe, scarce knowing what we did,
The banner and the maiden we pursue.
And fired with ardor, rushed upon the foe,
Who, much amazed, stand motionless and view
The miracle with fixed and wondering gaze.
Then, as if seized by terror sent from God,
They suddenly betake themselves to flight,
And casting arms and armor to the ground,
Disperse in wild disorder o'er the field.
No leader's call, no signal now avails;
Senseless from terror, without looking back,
Horses and men plunge headlong in the stream,
Where they without resistance are despatched.
It was a slaughter rather than a fight!
Two thousand of the foe bestrewed the field,
Not reckoning numbers swallowed by the flood,
While of our company not one was slain.

CHAS. 'Tis strange, by heaven! most wonderful and strange!

SOREL. A maiden worked this miracle, you say?
Whence did she come? Who is she?

RAOUL. Who she is
She will reveal to no one but the king!
She calls herself a seer and prophetess
Ordained by God, and promises to raise
The siege of Orleans ere the moon shall change.
The people credit her, and thirst for war.
The host she follows — she'll be here anon.
[*The ringing of bells is heard, together with the clang of arms.*
Hark to the din! The pealing of the bells!
'Tis she! The people greet God's messenger.
CHARLES (*to* DUCHATEL).
Conduct her thither. [*To the* ARCHBISHOP.
What should I believe?
A maiden brings me conquest even now,
When naught can save me but a hand divine!
This is not in the common course of things.
And dare I here believe a miracle?
MANY VOICES (*behind the scene*).
Hail to the maiden! — the deliverer!
CHAS. She comes! Dunois, now occupy my place!
We will make trial of this wond'rous maid.
Is she indeed inspired and sent by God
She will be able to discern the king.
[DUNOIS *seats himself; the* KING *stands at his right hand,* AGNES SOREL *near him; the* ARCHBISHOP *and the others opposite; so that the intermediate space remains vacant.*

SCENE X.

The same. JOHANNA, *accompanied by the councillors and many knights, who occupy the background of the scene; she advances with noble bearing, and slowly surveys the company.*

DUNOIS (*after a long and solemn pause*).
Art thou the wond'rous maiden ——
JOHANNA (*interrupts him, regarding him with dignity*).
Bastard of Orleans, thou wilt tempt thy God!
This place abandon, which becomes thee not!
To this more mighty one the maid is sent.
[*With a firm step she approaches the* KING, *bows one*

knee before him, and, rising immediately, steps back. All present express their astonishment, DUNOIS *forsakes his seat, which is occupied by the* KING.

CHAS. Maiden, thou ne'er hast seen my face before.
Whence hast thou then this knowledge?

JOHANNA. Thee I saw
When none beside, save God in heaven, beheld thee.
[*She approaches the* KING, *and speaks mysteriously.*
Bethink thee, Dauphin, in the bygone night,
When all around lay buried in deep sleep,
Thou from thy couch didst rise and offer up
An earnest prayer to God. Let these retire
And I will name the subject of thy prayer.

CHAS. What I to Heaven confided need not be
From men concealed. Disclose to me my prayer,
And I shall doubt no more that God inspires thee.

JOHAN. Three prayers thou offeredst, Dauphin; listen now
Whether I name them to thee! Thou didst pray
That if there were appended to this crown
Unjust possession, or if heavy guilt,
Not yet atoned for, from thy father's times,
Occasioned this most lamentable war,
God would accept thee as a sacrifice,
Have mercy on thy people, and pour forth
Upon thy head the chalice of his wrath.

CHARLES (*steps back with awe*).
Who art thou, mighty one? Whence comest thou?
[*All express their astonishment.*

JOHAN. To God thou offeredst this second prayer:
That if it were his will and high decree
To take away the sceptre from thy race,
And from thee to withdraw whate'er thy sires,
The monarchs of this kingdom, once possessed,
He in his mercy would preserve to thee
Three priceless treasures — a contented heart,
Thy friend's affection, and thine Agnes' love.
[*The* KING *conceals his face: the spectators express their astonishment. After a pause.*
Thy third petition shall I name to thee?

CHAS. Enough; I credit thee! This doth surpass
Mere human knowledge: thou art sent by God!
ARCHB. Who art thou, wonderful and holy maid?
What favored region bore thee? What blest pair,
Beloved of Heaven, may claim thee as their child?
JOHAN. Most reverend father, I am named Johanna,
I am a shepherd's lowly daughter, born
In Dom Remi, a village of my king.
Included in the diocese of Toul,
And from a child I kept my father's sheep.
And much and frequently I heard them tell
Of the strange islanders, who o'er the sea
Had come to make us slaves, and on us force
A foreign lord, who loveth not the people;
How the great city, Paris, they had seized,
And had usurped dominion o'er the realm.
Then earnestly God's Mother I implored
To save us from the shame of foreign chains,
And to preserve to us our lawful king.
Not distant from my native village stands
An ancient image of the Virgin blest,
To which the pious pilgrims oft repaired;
Hard by a holy oak, of blessed power,
Standeth, far-famed through wonders manifold.
Beneath the oak's broad shade I loved to sit
Tending my flock — my heart still drew me there.
And if by chance among the desert hills
A lambkin strayed, 'twas shown me in a dream,
When in the shadow of this oak I slept.
And once, when through the night beneath this tree
In pious adoration I had sat,
Resisting sleep, the Holy One appeared,
Bearing a sword and banner, otherwise
Clad like a shepherdess, and thus she spake:
"'Tis I; arise, Johanna! leave thy flock,
The Lord appoints thee to another task!
Receive this banner! Gird thee with this sword!
Therewith exterminate my people's foes;
Conduct to Rheims thy royal master's son,
And crown him with the kingly diadem!"
And I made answer: "How may I presume

To undertake such deeds, a tender maid,
Unpractised in the dreadful art of war!"
And she replied: "A maiden pure and chaste
Achieves whate'er on earth is glorious
If she to eartly love ne'er yields her heart.
Look upon me! a virgin, like thyself;
I to the Christ, the Lord divine, gave birth,
And am myself divine!" Mine eyelids then
She touched, and when I upward turned my gaze,
Heaven's wide expanse was filled with angel-boys,
Who bore white lilies in their hands, while tones
Of sweetest music floated through the air.
And thus on three successive nights appeared
The Holy One, and cried, — "Arise, Johanna!
The Lord appoints thee to another task!"
And when the third night she revealed herself,
Wrathful she seemed, and chiding spake these words
"Obedience, woman's duty here on earth;
Severe endurance is her heavy doom;
She must be purified through discipline;
Who serveth here, is glorified above!"
While thus she spake, she let her shepherd garb
Fall from her, and as Queen of Heaven stood forth
Enshrined in radiant light, while golden clouds
Upbore her slowly to the realms of bliss.

[*All are moved;* AGNES SOREL *weeping, hides her face on the bosom of the* KING.

ARCHBISHOP (*after a long pause*).
Before divine credentials such as these
Each doubt of earthly prudence must subside,
Her deeds attest the truth of what she speaks,
For God alone such wonders can achieve.

DUNOIS. I credit not her wonders, but her eyes
Which beam with innocence and purity.

CHAS. Am I, a sinner, worthy of such favor?
Infallible, All-searching eye, thou seest
Mine inmost heart, my deep humility!

JOHAN. Humility shines brightly in the skies;
Thou art abased, hence God exalteth thee.

CHAS. Shall I indeed withstand mine enemies?

JOHAN. France I will lay submissive at thy feet!

CHAS. And Orleans, say'st thou, will not be surrendered?
JOHAN. The Loire shall sooner roll its waters back.
CHAS. Shall I in triumph enter into Rheims?
JOHAN. I through ten thousand foes will lead thee there.
[*The knights make a noise with their lances and shields, and evince signs of courage.*
DUNOIS. Appoint the maiden to command the host!
We follow blindly whereso'er she leads!
The Holy One's prophetic eye shall guide,
And this brave sword from danger shall protect her!
HIRE. A universe in arms we will not fear,
If she, the mighty one, precede our troops.
The God of battle walketh by her side;
Let her conduct us on to victory!
[*The knights clang their arms and step forward.*
CHAS. Yes, holy maiden, do thou lead mine host;
My chiefs and warriors shall submit to thee.
This sword of matchless temper, proved in war,
Sent back in anger by the Constable,
Hath found a hand more worthy. Prophetess,
Do thou receive it, and henceforward be ——
JOHAN. No, noble Dauphin! conquest to my liege
Is not accorded through this instrument
Of earthly might. I know another sword
Wherewith I am to conquer, which to thee,
I, as the Spirit taught, will indicate;
Let it be hither brought.
CHARLES. Name it, Johanna.
JOHAN. Send to the ancient town of Fierbois;
There in Saint Catherine's churchyard is a vault
Where lie in heaps the spoils of bygone war.
Among them is the sword which I must use.
It by three golden lilies may be known,
Upon the blade impressed. Let it be brought,
For thou, my liege, shalt conquer through this sword.
CHAS. Perform what she commands.
JOHANNA. And a white banner,
Edged with a purple border, let me bear.
Upon this banner let the Queen of Heaven
Be pictured, with the beauteous Jesus child

Floating in glory o'er this earthly ball.
For so the Holy Mother showed it me.

CHAS. So be it as thou sayest.

JOHANNA (*to the* ARCHBISHOP). Reverend bishop;
Lay on my head thy consecrated hands!
Pronounce a blessing, Father, on thy child!
[*She kneels down.*

ARCH. Not blessings to receive, but to dispense
Art thou appointed. Go, with power divine!
But we are sinners all and most unworthy.
[*She rises: a* PAGE *enters.*

PAGE. A herald from the English generals.

JOHAN. Let him appear, for he is sent by God!
[*The* KING *motions to the* PAGE, *who retires.*

SCENE XI.

The HERALD. *The same.*

CHAS. Thy tidings, herald? What thy message! Speak!

HER. Who is it, who for Charles of Valois,
The Count of Pointhieu, in this presence speaks?

DUNOIS. Unworthy herald! base, insulting knave!
Dost thou presume the monarch of the French
Thus in his own dominions to deny?
Thou art protected by thine office, else ——

HER. One king alone is recognized by France,
And he resideth in the English camp.

CHAS. Peace, peace, good cousin! Speak thy message, herald!

HER. My noble general laments the blood
Which hath already flowed, and still must flow.
Hence, in the scabbard holding back the sword,
Before by storm the town of Orleans falls,
He offers thee an amicable treaty.

CHAS. Proceed!

JOHANNA (*stepping forward*).
Permit me, Dauphin, in thy stead,
To parley with this herald.

CHARLES. Do so, maid!
Determine thou, for peace, or bloody war.

JOHANNA (*to the* HERALD). [mouth?
Who sendeth thee? Who speaketh through thy
HER. The Earl of Salisbury; the British chief.
JOHAN. Herald, 'tis false! The earl speaks not through thee.
Only the living speak, the dead are silent.
HER. The earl is well, and full of lusty strength;
He lives to bring down ruin on your heads.
JOHAN. When thou didst quit the British camp he lived.
This morn, while gazing from Le Tournelle's tower,
A ball from Orleans struck him to the ground.
Smilest thou that I discern what is remote?
Not to my words give credence; but believe
The witness of thine eyes! his funeral train
Thou shalt encounter as thou goest hence!
Now, herald, speak, and do thine errand here.
HER. If what is hidden thou canst thus reveal,
Thou knowest mine errand ere I tell it thee.
JOHAN. It boots me not to know it. But do thou
Give ear unto my words! This message bear
In answer to the lords who sent thee here.
Monarch of England, and ye haughty dukes,
Bedford and Gloucester, regents of this realm!
To heaven's high King ye are accountable
For all the blood that hath been shed! Restore
The keys of all the cities ta'en by force
In opposition to God's holy law!
The maiden cometh from the King of Heaven
And offers you or peace or bloody war.
Choose ye! for this I say, that ye may know it:
To you this beauteous realm is not assigned
By Mary's son; — but God hath given it
To Charles, my lord and Dauphin, who ere long
Will enter Paris with a monarch's pomp,
Attended by the great ones of his realm.
Now, herald, go, and speedily depart,
For ere thou canst attain the British camp
And do thine errand, is the maiden there,
To plant the sign of victory at Orleans.

[*She retires. In the midst of a general movement, the curtain falls.*

ACT II.

Landscape, bounded by rocks.

Scene I.

Talbot *and* Lionel, *English generals*, Philip, Duke of Burgundy, Fastolfe, *and* Chatillon, *with soldiers and banners.*

Talbot. Here let us make a halt beneath these rocks,
And pitch our camp, in case our scattered troops,
Dispersed in panic fear, again should rally.
Choose trusty sentinels, and guard the heights!
'Tis true the darkness shields us from pursuit,
And sure I am, unless the foe have wings,
We need not fear surprisal. Still 'tis well
To practice caution, for we have to do
With a bold foe, and have sustained defeat.
[Fastolfe *goes out with the soldiers.*
Lionel. Defeat! My general, do not speak that word.
It stings me to the quick to think the French
To-day have seen the backs of Englishmen.
Oh, Orleans! Orleans! Grave of England's glory!
Our honor lies upon thy fatal plains
Defeat most ignominious and burlesque!
Who will in future years believe the tale!
The victors of Poictiers and Agincourt,
Cressy's bold heroes, routed by a woman?
Burg. That must console us. Not by mortal power,
But by the devil have we been o'erthrown!
Talbot. The devil of our own stupidity!
How, Burgundy? Do princes quake and fear
Before the phantom which appals the vulgar?
Credulity is but a sorry cloak
For cowardice. Your people first took flight.
Burg. None stood their ground. The flight was general.
Talbot. 'Tis false! Your wing fled first. You wildly broke
Into our camp, exclaiming: "Hell is loose,
The devil combats on the side of France!"
And thus you brought confusion 'mong our troops.
Lionel. You can't deny it. Your wing yielded first.

BURG. Because the brunt of battle there commenced.
TALBOT. The maiden knew the weakness of our camp;
She rightly judged where fear was to be found.
BURG. How? Shall the blame of our disaster rest
With Burgundy?
LIONEL. By heaven! were we alone,
We English, never had we Orleans lost!
BURG. No, truly! for ye ne'er had Orleans seen!
Who opened you a way into this realm,
And reached you forth a kind and friendly hand
When you descended on this hostile coast?
Who was it crowned your Henry at Paris,
And unto him subdued the people's hearts?
Had this Burgundian arm not guided you
Into this realm, by heaven you ne'er had seen
The smoke ascending from a single hearth!
LIONEL. Were conquests with big words effected, duke,
You, doubtless, would have conquered France alone.
BURG. The loss of Orleans angers you, and now
You vent your gall on me, your friend and ally.
What lost us Orleans but your avarice?
The city was prepared to yield to me,
Your envy was the sole impediment.
TALBOT. We did not undertake the siege for you.
BURG. How would it stand with you if I withdrew
With all my host?
LIONEL. We should not be worse off
Than when, at Agincourt, we proved a match
For you and all the banded power of France.
BURG. Yet much you stood in need of our alliance;
The regent purchased it at heavy cost.
TALBOT. Most dearly, with the forfeit of our honor,
At Orleans have we paid for it to-day.
BURG. Urge me no further, lords. Ye may repent it!
Did I forsake the banners of my king,
Draw down upon my head the traitor's name,
To be insulted thus by foreigners?
Why am I here to combat against France?
If I must needs endure ingratitude,
Let it come rather from my native king!
TALBOT. You're in communication with the Dauphin,

We know it well, but we soon shall find means
To guard ourselves 'gainst treason.

BURGUNDY. Death and hell!
Am I encountered thus? Chatillon, hark!
Let all my troops prepare to quit the camp.
We will retire into our own domain.

[CHATILLON *goes out.*

LIONEL. God speed you there! Never did Britain's fame
More brightly shine than when she stood alone,
Confiding solely in her own good sword.
Let each one fight his battle for himself,
For 'tis eternal truth that English blood
Cannot, with honor, blend with blood of France.

SCENE II.

The same. QUEEN ISABEL, *attended by a* PAGE.

ISABEL. What must I hear? This fatal strife forbear!
What brain-bewildering planet o'er your minds
Sheds dire perplexity? When unity
Alone can save you, will you part in hate,
And, warring 'mong yourselves, prepare your doom?
— I do entreat you, noble duke, recall
Your hasty order. You, renowned Talbot,
Seek to appease an irritated friend!
Come, Lionel, aid me to reconcile
These haughty spirits and establish peace.

LIONEL. Not I, madame. It is all one to me.
'Tis my belief, when things are misallied,
The sooner they part company the better.

ISABEL. How? Do the arts of hell, which on the field
Wrought such disastrous ruin, even here
Bewilder and befool us? Who began
This fatal quarrel? Speak! Lord-general!
Your own advantage did you so forget,
As to offend your worthy friend and ally?
What could you do without his powerful arm?
'Twas he who placed your monarch on the throne,
He holds him there, and he can hurl him thence;
His army strengthens you — still more his name.
Were England all her citizens to pour

Upon our coasts, she never o'er this realm
Would gain dominion did she stand alone;
No! France can only be subdued by France!

TALBOT. A faithful friend we honor as we ought;
Discretion warns us to beware the false.

BURG. The liar's brazen front beseemeth him
Who would absolve himself from gratitude.

ISABEL. How, noble duke? Could you so far renounce
Your princely honor, and your sense of shame,
As clasp the hand of him who slew your sire?
Are you so mad to entertain the thought
Of cordial reconcilement with the Dauphin,
Whom you yourself have hurled to ruin's brink?
His overthrow you have well nigh achieved,
And madly now would you renounce your work?
Here stand your allies. Your salvation lies
In an indissoluble bond with England?

BURG. Far is my thought from treaty with the Dauphin;
But the contempt and insolent demeanor
Of haughty England I will not endure.

ISABEL. Come, noble duke? Excuse a hasty word.
Heavy the grief which bows the general down,
And well you know misfortune makes unjust.
Come! come! embrace; let me this fatal breach
Repair at once, ere it becomes eternal.

TALBOT. What think you, Burgundy? A noble heart,
By reason vanquished, doth confess its fault.
A wise and prudent word the queen hath spoken;
Come, let my hand with friendly pressure heal
The wound inflicted by my angry tongue.

BURG. Discreet the counsel offered by the queen!
My just wrath yieldeth to necessity.

ISABEL. 'Tis well! Now, with a brotherly embrace
Confirm and seal the new-established bond;
And may the winds disperse what hath been spoken.

[BURGUNDY *and* TALBOT *embrace.*

LIONEL (*contemplating the group aside*).
Hail to an union by the furies planned!

ISABEL. Fate hath proved adverse, we have lost a battle,
But do not, therefore, let your courage sink.
The Dauphin, in despair of heavenly aid,

Doth make alliance with the powers of hell;
Vainly his soul he forfeits to the devil,
For hell itself cannot deliver him.
A conquering maiden leads the hostile force;
Yours, I myself will lead; to you I'll stand
In place of maiden or of prophetess.

LIONEL. Madame, return to Paris! We desire
To war with trusty weapons, not with women.

TALBOT. Go! go! Since your arrival in the camp,
Fortune hath fled our banners, and our course
Hath still been retrograde.

BURGUNDY. Depart at once!
Your presence here doth scandalize the host.

ISABEL (*looks from one to the other with astonishment*).
This, Burgundy, from you? Do you take part
Against me with these thankless English lords?

BURG. Go! go! The thought of combating for you
Unnerves the courage of the bravest men.

ISABEL. I scarce among you have established peace,
And you already form a league against me!

TALBOT. Go, in God's name. When you have left the camp
No devil will again appal our troops.

ISABEL. Say, am I not your true confederate?
Are we not banded in a common cause?

TALBOT. Thank God! your cause of quarrel is not ours.
We combat in an honorable strife.

BURG. A father's bloody murder I avenge.
Stern filial duty consecrates my arms.

TALBOT. Confess at once. Your conduct towards the Dauphin
Is an offence alike to God and man.

ISABEL. Curses blast him and his posterity!
The shameless son who sins against his mother!

BURG. Ay! to avenge a husband and a father!

ISABEL. To judge his mother's conduct he presumed!

LIONEL. That was, indeed, irreverent in a son!

ISABEL. And me, forsooth, he banished from the realm

TALBOT. Urged to the measure by the public voice.

ISABEL. A curse light on him if I e'er forgive him!
Rather than see him on his father's throne ——

TALBOT. His mother's honor you would sacrifice!
ISABEL. Your feeble natures cannot comprehend
The vengance of an outraged mother's heart.
Who pleasures me, I love; who wrongs, I hate.
If he who wrongs me chance to be my son,
All the more worthy is he of my hate.
The life I gave I will again take back
From him who doth, with ruthless violence,
The bosom rend which bore and nourished him.
Ye, who do thus make war upon the Dauphin,
What rightful cause have ye to plunder him?
What crime hath he committed against you?
What insult are you called on to avenge?
Ambition, paltry envy, goad you on;
I have a right to hate him — he's my son.
TALBOT. He feels his mother in her dire revenge!
ISABEL. Mean hypocrites! I hate you and despise.
Together with the world, you cheat yourselves!
With robber-hands you English seek to clutch
This realm of France, where you have no just right,
Nor equitable claim, to so much earth
As could be covered by your charger's hoof.
— This duke, too, whom the people style the Good,
Doth to a foreign lord, his country's foe,
For gold betray the birthland of his sires.
And yet is justice ever on your tongue.
— Hypocrisy I scorn. Such as I am,
So let the world behold me!
BURGUNDY. It is true!
Your reputation you have well maintained.
ISABEL. I've passions and warm blood, and as a queen
Came to this realm to live, and not to seem.
Should I have lingered out a joyless life
Because the curse of adverse destiny
To a mad consort joined my blooming youth?
More than my life I prize my liberty.
And who assails me here —— But why should I
Stoop to dispute with you about my rights?
Your sluggish blood flows slowly in your veins!
Strangers to pleasure, ye know only rage!
This duke, too — who, throughout his whole career,

Hath wavered to and fro, 'twixt good and ill —
Can neither love or hate with his whole heart.
— I go to Melun. Let this gentleman,
[*Pointing to* LIONEL.
Who doth my fancy please, attend me there,
To cheer my solitude, and you may work
Your own good pleasure! I'll inquire no more
Concerning the Burgundians or the English.
[*She beckons to her* PAGE, *and is about to retire.*

LIONEL. Rely upon us, we will send to Melun
The fairest youths whom we in battle take.
[*Coming back.*

ISABEL. Skilful your arm to wield the sword of death,
The French alone can round the polished phrase.
[*She goes out.*

SCENE III.

TALBOT, BURGUNDY, LIONEL.

TALBOT. Heavens! What a woman!

LIONEL. Now, brave generals,
Your counsel! Shall we prosecute our flight,
Or turn, and with a bold and sudden stroke
Wipe out the foul dishonor of to-day?

BURG. We are too weak, our soldiers are dispersed,
The recent terror still unnerves the host.

TALBOT. Blind terror, sudden impulse of a moment,
Alone occasioned our disastrous rout.
This phantom of the terror-stricken brain,
More closely viewed will vanish into air.
My counsel, therefore, is, at break of day,
To lead the army back, across the stream,
To meet the enemy.

BURGUNDY. Consider well ——

LIONEL. Your pardon! Here is nothing to consider
What we have lost we must at once retrieve,
Or look to be eternally disgraced.

TALBOT. It is resolved. To-morrow morn we fight,
This dread-inspiring phantom to destroy,
Which thus doth blind and terrify the host
Let us in fight encounter this she-devil.

If she oppose her person to our sword,
Trust me, she never will molest us more;
If she avoid our stroke — and be assured
She will not stand the hazard of a battle —
Then is the dire enchantment at an end?

LIONEL. So be it! And to me, my general, leave
This easy, bloodless combat, for I hope
Alive to take this ghost, and in my arms,
Before the Bastard's eyes — her paramour —
To bear her over to the English camp,
To be the sport and mockery of the host.

BURG. Make not too sure.

TALBOT. If she encounter me,
I shall not give her such a soft embrace.
Come now, exhausted nature to restore
Through gentle sleep. At daybreak we set forth.

[*They go out.*

SCENE IV.

JOHANNA *with her banner, in a helmet and breastplate, otherwise attired as a woman.* DUNOIS, LA HIRE, *knights and soldiers, appear above upon the rocky path, pass silently over, and appear immediately after on the scene.*

JOHANNA (*to the knights who surround her while the procession continues above.*)
The wall is scaled and we are in the camp!
Now fling aside the mantle of still night,
Which hitherto hath veiled your silent march,
And your dread presence to the foe proclaim
By your loud battle-cry — God and the maiden!

ALL (*exclaim aloud, amidst the loud clang of arms*).
God and the maiden! [*Drums and trumpets.*

SENTINELS (*behind the scene*). The foe! The foe! The foe!

JOHAN. Ho! torches here! Hurl fire into the tents!
Let the devouring flames augment the horror,
While threatening death doth compass them around!

[*Soldiers hasten on, she is about to follow.*

DUNOIS (*holding her back*).
Thy part thou hast accomplished now, Johanna!
Into the camp thou hast conducted us,

The foe thou hast delivered in our hands,
Now from the rush of war remain apart!
The bloody consummation leave to us.

HIRE. Point out the path of conquest to the host;
Before us, in pure hand, the banner bear.
But wield the fatal weapon not thyself;
Tempt not the treacherous god of battle, for
He rageth blindly, and he spareth not.

JOHAN. Who dares impede my progress? Who presume
The spirit to control which guideth me?
Still must the arrow wing its destined flight!
Where danger is, there must Johanna be;
Nor now, nor here, am I foredoomed to fall;
Our monarch's royal brow I first must see
Invested with the round of sovereignty.
No hostile power can rob me of my life,
Till I've accomplished the commands of God.
[*She goes out.*

HIRE. Come, let us follow after her, Dunois,
And let our valiant bosoms be her shield! [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

ENGLISH SOLDIERS *hurry over the stage. Afterwards* TALBOT.

1 SOL. The maiden in the camp!
2 SOLDIER. Impossible!
It cannot be! How came she in the camp?
3 SOL. Why, through the air! The devil aided her!
4 AND 5 SOLDIERS.
Fly! fly! We are dead men!
TALBOT (*enters*).
They heed me not! They stay not at my call!
The sacred bands of discipline are loosed!
As hell had poured her damned legions forth,
A wild, distracting impulse whirls along,
In one mad throng, the cowardly and brave.
I cannot rally e'en the smallest troop
To form a bulwark 'gainst the hostile flood,
Whose raging billows press into our camp!
Do I alone retain my sober senses,

While all around in wild delirium rave?
To fly before these weak, degenerate Frenchmen
Whom we in twenty battles have overthrown?
Who is she then — the irresistible —
The dread-inspiring goddess, who doth turn
At once the tide of battle, and transform
To lions bold a herd of timid deer?
A juggling minx, who plays the well-learned part
Of heroine, thus to appal the brave?
A woman snatch from me all martial fame?

SOLDIER (*rushes in*).

The maiden comes! Fly, general! fly! fly!

TALBOT (*strikes him down*).

Fly thou, thyself, to hell! This sword shall pierce
Who talks to me of fear, or coward flight!

[*He goes out.*

SCENE VI.

The prospect opens. The English camp is seen in flames. Drums, flight, and pursuit. After a while MONTGOMERY *enters.*

MONTGOMERY (*alone*).

Where shall I flee? Foes all around and death!
Lo! here
The furious general who, with threatening sword, prevents
Escape, and drives us back into the jaws of death.
The dreadful maiden there — the terrible — who, like
Devouring flame, destruction spreads; while all around
Appears no bush wherein to hide — no sheltering cave!
Oh, would that o'er the sea I never had come here!
Me miserable! Empty dreams deluded me —
Cheap glory to achieve on Gallia's martial fields.
And I am guided by malignant destiny
Into this murderous flight. Oh, were I far, far hence.
Still in my peaceful home, on Severn's flowery banks,
Where in my father's house, in sorrow and in tears,
I left my mother and my fair young bride.

[JOHANNA *appears in the distance.*

Wo's me! What do I see! The dreadful form appears!
Arrayed in lurid light, she from the raging fire
Issues, as from the jaws of hell, a midnight ghost.
Where shall I go? where flee? Already from afar
She seizes on me with her eye of fire, and flings
Her fatal and unerring coil, whose magic folds
With ever-tightening pressure, bind my feet and make
Escape impossible! Howe'er my heart rebels,
I am compelled to follow with my gaze that form
Of dread!

[JOHANNA *advances towards him some steps; and again remains standing.*

She comes! I will not passively await
Her furious onset! Imploringly I'll clasp
Her knees! I'll sue to her for life. She is a woman.
I may perchance to pity move her by my tears!

[*While he is on the point of approaching her she draws near.*

SCENE VII.

JOHANNA, MONTGOMERY.

JOHAN. Prepare to die! A British mother bore thee!
MONTGOMERY (*falls at her feet*).
Fall back, terrific one! Forbear to strike
An unprotected foe! My sword and shield
I've flung aside, and supplicating fall
Defenceless at thy feet. A ransom take!
Extinguish not the precious light of life!
With fair possessions crowned, my father dwells
In Wales' fair land, where among verdant meads
The winding Severn rolls his silver tide,
And fifty villages confess his sway.
With heavy gold he will redeem his son,
When he shall hear I'm in the camp of France.
JOHAN. Deluded mortal! to destruction doomed!
Thou'rt fallen in the maiden's hand, from which
Redemption or deliverance there is none.
Had adverse fortune given thee a prey
To the fierce tiger or the crocodile —

Hadst robbed the lion mother of her brood —
Compassion thou might'st hope to find and pity;
But to encounter me is certain death.
For my dread compact with the spirit realm —
The stern inviolable — bindeth me,
To slay each living thing whom battle's God,
Full charged with doom, delivers to my sword.

MONT. Thy speech is fearful, but thy look is mild;
Not dreadful art thou to contemplate near;
My heart is drawn towards thy lovely form.
Oh! by the mildness of thy gentle sex,
Attend my prayer. Compassionate my youth.

JOHAN. Name me not woman! Speak not of my sex
Like to the bodiless spirits, who know naught
Of earth's humanities, I own no sex;
Beneath this vest of steel there beats no heart.

MONT. Oh! by love's sacred, all-pervading power,
To whom all hearts yield homage, I conjure thee.
At home I left behind a gentle bride,
Beauteous as thou, and rich in blooming grace·
Weeping she waiteth her betrothed's return.
Oh! if thyself dost ever hope to love,
If in thy love thou hopest to be happy,
Then ruthless sever not two gentle hearts,
Together linked in love's most holy bond!

JOHAN. Thou dost appeal to earthly, unknown gods,
To whom I yield no homage. Of love's bond,
By which thou dost conjure me, I know naught,
Nor ever will I know his empty service.
Defend thy life, for death doth summon thee.

MONT. Take pity on my sorrowing parents, whom
I left at home. Doubtless thou, too, hast left
Parents, who feel disquietude for thee.

JOHAN. Unhappy man! thou dost remember me
How many mothers of this land your arms
Have rendered childless and disconsolate;
How many gentle children fatherless;
How many fair young brides dejected widows!
Let England's mothers now be taught despair,
And learn to weep the bitter tear oft shed
By the bereaved and sorrowing wives of France.

MONT. 'Tis hard in foreign lands to die unwept.
JOHAN. Who called you over to this foreign land,
To waste the blooming culture of our fields,
To chase the peasant from his household hearth,
And in our cities' peaceful sanctuary
To hurl the direful thunderbolt of war?
In the delusion of your hearts ye thought
To plunge in servitude the freeborn French,
And to attach their fair and goodly realm,
Like a small boat, to your proud English bark!
Ye fools! The royal arms of France are hung
Fast by the throne of God; and ye as soon
From the bright wain of heaven might snatch a star
As rend a single village from this realm,
Which shall remain inviolate forever!
The day of vengeance is at length arrived;
Not living shall ye measure back the sea,
The sacred sea — the boundary set by God
Betwixt our hostile nations — and the which
Ye ventured impiously to overpass.
MONTGOMERY (*lets go her hands*).
Oh, I must die! I feel the grasp of death!
JOHAN. Die, friend! Why tremble at the approach of death?
Of mortals the irrevocable doom?
Look upon me! I'm born a shepherd maid;
This hand, accustomed to the peaceful crook,
Is all unused to wield the sword of death.
Yet, snatched away from childhood's peaceful haunts,
From the fond love of father and of sisters,
Urged by no idle dream of earthly glory,
But heaven-appointed to achieve your ruin,
Like a destroying angel I must roam,
Spreading dire havoc around me, and at length
Myself must fall a sacrifice to death!
Never again shall I behold my home!
Still, many of your people I must slay,
Still, many widows make, but I at length
Myself shall perish, and fulfil my doom.
Now thine fulfil. Arise! resume thy sword,
And let us fight for the sweet prize of life.

MONTGOMERY (*stands up*).

Now, if thou art a mortal like myself,
Can weapons wound thee, it may be assigned
To this good arm to end my country's woe,
Thee sending, sorceress, to the depths of hell.
In God's most gracious hands I leave my fate.
Accursed one! to thine assistance call
The fiends of hell! Now combat for thy life!

[*He seizes his sword and shield, and rushes upon her; martial music is heard in the distance. After a short conflict* MONTGOMERY *falls.*

SCENE VIII.

JOHANNA (*alone*).

To death thy foot did bear thee — fare thee well!

[*She steps away from him and remains absorbed in thought.*

Virgin, thou workest mightily in me!
My feeble arm thou dost endue with strength,
And steep'st my woman's heart in cruelty.
In pity melts the soul and the hand trembles,
As it did violate some sacred fane,
To mar the goodly person of the foe.
Once I did shudder at the polished sheath,
But when 'tis needed, I'm possessed with strength,
And as it were itself a thing of life,
The fatal weapon, in my trembling grasp,
Self-swayed, inflicteth the unerring stroke.

SCENE IX.

A KNIGHT *with closed visor*, JOHANNA.

KNIGHT. Accursed one! thy hour of death has come!
Long have I sought thee on the battle-field,
Fatal delusion! get thee back to hell,
Whence thou didst issue forth.

JOHANNA. Say, who art thou,
Whom his bad genius sendeth in my way?
Princely thy port, no Briton dost thou seem,
For the Burgundian colors stripe thy shield,
Before the which my sword inclines its point.

KNIGHT. Vile castaway! Thou all unworthy art
To fall beneath a prince's noble hand.
The hangman's axe should thy accursed head
Cleave from thy trunk, unfit for such vile use
The royal Duke of Burgundy's brave sword.
JOHAN. Art thou indeed that noble duke himself?
KNIGHT (*raises his visor*).
I'm he, vile creature, tremble and despair!
The arts of hell shall not protect thee more.
Thou hast till now weak dastards overcome;
Now thou dost meet a man.

SCENE X.

DUNOIS *and* LA HIRE. *The same.*

DUNOIS. Hold, Burgundy!
Turn! combat now with men, and not with maids.
HIRE. We will defend the holy prophetess;
First must thy weapon penetrate this breast.
BURG. I fear not this seducing Circe; no,
Nor you, whom she hath changed so shamefully!
Oh, blush, Dunois! and do thou blush, La Hire!
To stoop thy valor to these hellish arts —
To be shield-bearer to a sorceress!
Come one — come all! He only who despairs
Of heaven's protection seeks the aid of hell.
[*They prepare for combat*, JOHANNA *steps between.*
JOHAN. Forbear!
BURGUNDY. Dost tremble for thy lover? Thus
Before thine eyes he shall ——
[*He makes a thrust at* DUNOIS.
JOHANNA. Dunois, forbear!
Part them, La Hire! no blood of France must flow:
Not hostile weapons must this strife decide,
Above the stars 'tis otherwise decreed.
Fall back! I say. Attend and venerate
The Spirit which hath seized, which speaks through me!
DUNOIS. Why, maiden, now hold back my upraised arm?
Why check the just decision of the sword?

My weapon pants to deal the fatal blow
Which shall avenge and heal the woes of France.
[*She places herself in the midst and separates the parties.*
JOHAN. Fall back, Dunois! Stand where thou art, La Hire!
Somewhat I have to say to Burgundy.
[*When all is quiet.*
What wouldst thou, Burgundy? Who is the foe
Whom eagerly thy murderous glances seek?
This prince is, like thyself, a son of France, —
This hero is thy countryman, thy friend;
I am a daughter of thy fatherland.
We all, whom thou art eager to destroy,
Are of thy friends; — our longing arms prepare
To clasp, our bending knees to honor thee.
Our sword 'gainst thee is pointless, and that face
E'en in a hostile helm is dear to us,
For there we trace the features of our king.
BURG. What, syren! wilt thou with seducing words
Allure thy victim? Cunning sorceress,
Me thou deludest not. Mine ears are closed
Against thy treacherous words; and vainly dart
Thy fiery glances 'gainst this mail of proof.
To arms, Dunois!
With weapons let us fight, and not with words.
DUNOIS. First words, then weapons, Burgundy! Do words
With dread inspire thee? 'Tis a coward's fear,
And the betrayer of an evil cause.
JOHAN. 'Tis not imperious necessity
Which throws us at thy feet! We do not come
As suppliants before thee. Look around!
The English tents are level with the ground,
And all the field is covered with your slain.
Hark! the war-trumpets of the French resound;
God hath decided — ours the victory!
Our new-culled laurel garland with our friend
We fain would share. Come, noble fugitive!
Oh, come where justice and where victory dwell!
Even I, the messenger of heaven, extend

A sister's hand to thee. I fain would save
And draw thee over to our righteous cause!
Heaven hath declared for France! Angelic powers,
Unseen by thee, do battle for our king;
With lilies are the holy ones adorned,
Pure as this radiant banner is our cause;
Its blessed symbol is the queen of heaven.

BURG. Falsehood's fallacious words are full of guile,
But hers are pure and simple as a child's.
If evil spirits borrow this disguise,
They copy innocence triumphantly.
I'll hear no more. To arms, Dunois! to arms!
Mine ear, I feel, is weaker than mine arm.

JOHAN. You call me an enchantress, and accuse
Of hellish arts. Is it the work of hell
To heal dissension and to foster peace?
Comes holy concord from the depths below?
Say, what is holy, innocent, and good,
If not to combat for our fatherland?
Since when hath nature been so self-opposed
That heaven forsakes the just and righteous cause,
While hell protects it? If my words are true,
Whence could I draw them but from heaven above?
Who ever sought me in my shepherd-walks,
To teach the humble maid affairs of state?
I ne'er have stood with princes, to these lips
Unknown the arts of eloquence. Yet now,
When I have need of it to touch thy heart,
Insight and varied knowledge I possess;
The fate of empires and the doom of kings
Lie clearly spread before my childish mind,
And words of thunder issue from my mouth.

BURGUNDY (*greatly moved, looks at her with emotion and astonishment*).
How is it with me? Doth some heavenly power
Thus strangely stir my spirit's inmost depths?
This pure, this gentle creature cannot lie!
No, if enchantment blinds me, 'tis from heaven.
My spirit tells me she is sent from God.

JOHAN. Oh, he is moved! I have not prayed in vain,
Wrath's thunder-cloud dissolves in gentle tears,

And leaves his brow, while mercy's golden beams
Break from his eyes and gently promise peace.
Away with arms, now clasp him to your hearts,
He weeps — he's conquered, he is ours once more!

[*Her sword and banner fall; she hastens to him with outstretched arms, and embraces him in great agitation.* La Hire *and* Dunois *throw down their swords, and hasten also to embrace him.*

ACT III.

Residence of the King *at Chalons on the Marne.*

Scene I.

Dunois, La Hire.

Dunois. We have been true heart-friends, brothers in arms,
Still have we battled in a common cause,
And held together amid toil and death.
Let not the love of woman rend the bond
Which hath resisted every stroke of fate.

Hire. Hear me, my prince!

Dunois. You love the wondrous maid,
And well I know the purpose of your heart.
You think without delay to seek the king,
And to entreat him to bestow on you
Her hand in marriage. Of your bravery
The well-earned guerdon he cannot refuse
But know, — ere I behold her in the arms
Of any other ——

La Hire. Listen to me, prince!

Dunois. 'Tis not the fleeting passion of the eye
Attracts me to her. My unconquered sense
Had set at naught the fiery shafts of love
Till I beheld this wondrous maiden, sent
By a divine appointment to become
The savior of this kingdom, and my wife;
And on the instant in my heart I vowed
A sacred oath, to bear her home, my bride.

For she alone who is endowed with strength
Can be the strong man's friend. This glowing heart
Longs to repose upon a kindred breast,
Which can sustain and comprehend its strength.

HIRE. How dare I venture, prince, my poor deserts
To measure with your name's heroic fame!
When Count Dunois appeareth in the lists,
Each humbler suitor must forsake the field;
Still it doth ill become a shepherd maid
To stand as consort by your princely side.
The royal current in your veins would scorn
To mix with blood of baser quality.

DUNOIS. She, like myself, is holy Nature's child,
A child divine — hence we by birth are equal.
She bring dishonor on a prince's hand,
Who is the holy angel's bride, whose head
Is by a heavenly glory circled round,
Whose radiance far outshineth earthly crowns,
Who seeth lying far beneath her feet
All that is greatest, highest of this earth!
For thrones on thrones, ascending to the stars,
Would fail to reach the height where she abides
In angel majesty!

HIRE. Our monarch must decide.

DUNOIS. Not so! she must
Decide! Free hath she made this realm of France,
And she herself must freely give her heart.

HIRE. Here comes the king!

SCENE II.

CHARLES, AGNES, SOREL, DUCHATEL, *and* CHATILLON.

The same.

CHARLES (*to* CHATILLON).
He comes! My title he will recognize,
And do me homage as his sovereign liege?

CHATIL. Here, in his royal town of Chalons, sire,
The duke, my master, will fall down before thee.
He did command me, as my lord and king,
To give thee greeting. He'll be here anon.

SOREL. He comes! Hail beauteous and auspicious day,
Which bringeth joy, and peace, and reconcilement!

CHATIL. The duke, attended by two hundred knights,
Will hither come; he at thy feet will kneel;
But he expecteth not that thou to him
Should yield the cordial greeting of a kinsman.
CHAS. I long to clasp him to my throbbing heart.
CHATIL. The duke entreats that at this interview,
No word be spoken of the ancient strife!
CHAS. In Lethe be the past forever sunk!
The smiling future now invites our gaze.
CHATIL. All who have combated for Burgundy
Shall be included in the amnesty.
CHAS. So shall my realm be doubled in extent!
CHATIL. Queen Isabel, if she consent thereto,
Shall also be included in the peace.
CHAS. She maketh war on me, not I on her.
With her alone it rests to end our quarrel.
CHATIL. Twelve knights shall answer for thy royal word.
CHAS. My word is sacred.
CHATILLON. The archbishop shall
Between you break the consecrated host,
As pledge and seal of cordial reconcilement.
CHAS. Let my eternal weal be forfeited,
If my hand's friendly grasp belie my heart.
What other surety doth the duke require?
CHATILLON (*glancing at* DUCHATEL).
I see one standing here, whose presence, sire,
Perchance might poison the first interview.
[DUCHATEL *retires in silence.*
CHAS. Depart, Duchatel, and remain concealed
Until the duke can bear thee in his sight.
[*He follows him with his eye, then hastens after and embraces him.*
True-hearted friend! Thou wouldst far more than this
Have done for my repose! [*Exit* DUCHATEL.
CHATIL. This instrument doth name the other points.
CHARLES (*to the* ARCHBISHOP).
Let it be settled. We agree to all.
We count no price too high to gain a friend.
Go now, Dunois, and with a hundred knights,
Give courteous conduct to the noble duke.
Let the troops, garlanded with verdant boughs,

Receive their comrades with a joyous welcome.
Be the whole town arrayed in festive pomp,
And let the bells with joyous peal, proclaim
That France and Burgundy are reconciled.
[*A* PAGE *enters. Trumpets sound.*
Hark! What importeth that loud trumpet's call?

PAGE. The Duke of Burgundy hath stayed his march.
[*Exit.*

DUNOIS. Up! forth to meet him!
[*Exit with* LA HIRE *and* CHATILLON.

CHARLES (*to* SOREL).
My Agnes! thou dost weep! Even my strength
Doth almost fail me at this interview.
How many victims have been doomed to fall
Ere we could meet in peace and reconcilement!
But every storm at length suspends its rage,
Day follows on the murkiest night; and still
When comes the hour, the latest fruits mature!

ARCHBISHOP (*at the window*).
The thronging crowds impede the duke's advance;
He scarce can free himself. They lift him now
From off his horse; they kiss his spurs, his mantle.

CHAS. They're a good people, in whom love flames forth
As suddenly as wrath. In how brief space
They do forget that 'tis this very duke
Who slew, in fight, their fathers and their sons;
The moment swallows up the whole of life!
Be tranquil, Sorel. E'en thy passionate joy
Perchance might to his conscience prove a thorn.
Nothing should either shame or grieve him here.

SCENE III.

The DUKE OF BURGUNDY, DUNOIS, LA HIRE, CHATILLON, *and two other knights of the* DUKE'S *train. The* DUKE *remains standing at the door; the* KING *inclines towards him;* BURGUNDY *immediately advances, and in the moment when he is about to throw himself upon his knees, the* KING *receives him in his arms.*

CHAS. You have surprised us; it was our intent
To fetch you hither, but your steeds are fleet.

BURG. They bore me to my duty.
[*He embraces* SOREL, *and kisses her brow.*
With your leave!
At Arras, niece, it is our privilege,
And no fair damsel may exemption claim.
CHAS. Rumor doth speak your court the seat of love,
The mart where all that's beautiful must tarry.
BURG. We are a traffic-loving people, sire;
Whate'er of costly earth's wide realms produce,
For show and for enjoyment, is displayed
Upon our mart at Bruges; but above all
There woman's beauty is pre-eminent.
SOREL. More precious far is woman's truth; but it
Appeareth not upon the public mart.
CHAS. Kinsman, 'tis rumored to your prejudice
That woman's fairest virtue you despise.
BURG. The heresy inflicteth on itself
The heaviest penalty. 'Tis well for you,
From your own heart, my king, you learned betimes
What a wild life hath late revealed to me.
[*He perceives the* ARCHBISHOP, *and extends his hand.*
Most reverend minister of God! your blessing!
You still are to be found on duty's path,
Where those must walk who would encounter you.
ARCHB. Now let my Master call me when he will;
My heart is full, I can with joy depart,
Since that mine eyes have seen this day!
BURGUNDY (*to* SOREL). 'Tis said
That of your precious stones you robbed yourself,
Therefrom to forge 'gainst me the tools of war!
Bear you a soul so martial? Were you then
So resolute to work my overthrow?
Well, now our strife is over; what was lost
Will in due season all be found again.
Even your jewels have returned to you.
Against me to make war they were designed;
Receive them from me as a pledge of peace.
[*He receives a casket from one of the attendants, and presents it to her open.* SOREL, *embarrassed, looks at the* KING.
CHAS. Receive this present; 'tis a twofold pledge
Of reconcilement and of fairest love.

BURGUNDY (*placing a diamond rose in her hair*).
Why, is it not the diadem of France?
With full as glad a spirit I would place
The golden circle on this lovely brow.
[*Taking her hand significantly.*
And count on me if, at some future time
You should require a friend.
[AGNES SOREL *bursts into tears, and steps aside.* THE KING *struggles with his feelings. The bystanders contemplate the two princes with emotion.*
BURGUNDY (*after gazing round the circle, throws himself into the* KING'S *arms*). Oh, my king!
[*At the same moment the three Burgundian knights hasten to* DUNOIS, LA HIRE, *and the* ARCHBISHOP. *They embrace each other. The two* PRINCES *remain for a time speechless in each other's arms.*
I could renounce you! I could bear your hate!
CHAS. Hush! hush! No further!
BURGUNDY. I this English king
Could crown! Swear fealty to this foreigner!
And you, my sovereign, into ruin plunge!
CHAS. Forget it! Everything's forgiven now!
This single moment doth obliterate all.
'Twas a malignant star! A destiny!
BURGUNDY (*grasps his hand*).
Believe me, sire, I'll make amends for all.
Your bitter sorrow I will compensate;
You shall receive your kingdom back entire,
A solitary village shall not fail!
CHAS. We are united. Now I fear no foe.
BURG. Trust me, it was not with a joyous spirit
That I bore arms against you. Did you know?
Oh, wherefore sent you not this messenger?
[*Pointing to* SOREL.
I must have yielded to her gentle tears.
Henceforth, since breast to breast we have embraced,
No power of hell again shall sever us!
My erring course ends here. His sovereign's heart
Is the true resting-place for Burgundy.
ARCHBISHOP (*steps between them*).
Ye are united, princes! France doth rise

A renovated phœnix from its ashes.
The auspicious future greets us with a smile.
The country's bleeding wounds will heal again,
The villages, the desolated towns,
Rise in new splendor from their ruined heaps,
The fields array themselves in beauteous green;
But those who, victims of your quarrel, fell,
The dead, rise not again; the bitter tears,
Caused by your strife, remain forever wept!
One generation hath been doomed to woe;
On their descendants dawns a brighter day;
The gladness of the son wakes not the sire.
This the dire fruitage of your brother-strife!
Oh, princes, learn from hence to pause with dread,
Ere from its scabbard ye unsheath the sword.
The man of power lets loose the god of war,
But not, obedient, as from fields of air
Returns the falcon to the sportsman's hand,
Doth the wild deity obey the call
Of mortal voice; nor will the Saviour's hand
A second time forth issue from the clouds.

BURG. Oh, sire! an angel walketh by your side.
Where is she? Why do I behold her not?

CHAS. Where is Johanna? Wherefore faileth she
To grace the festival we owe to her?

ARCHB. She loves not, sire, the idless of the court,
And when the heavenly mandate calls her not
Forth to the world's observance, she retires,
And doth avoid the notice of the crowd.
Doubtless, unless the welfare of the realm
Claims her regard, she communes with her God,
For still a blessing on her steps attends.

SCENE IV.

The same.

JOHANNA *enters. She is clad in armor, and wears a garland in her hair.*

CHAS. Thou comest as a priestess decked, Johanna,
To consecrate the union formed by thee!

BURG. How dreadful was the maiden in the fight!
How lovely circled by the beams of peace!
My word, Johanna, have I now fulfilled?
Art thou contented? Have I thine applause?
JOHAN. The greatest favor thou hast shown thyself.
Arrayed in blessed light thou shinest now,
Who didst erewhile with bloody, ominous ray,
Hang like a moon of terror in the heavens.
[*Looking round.*
Many brave knights I find assembled here,
And joy's glad radiance beams in every eye;
One mourner, one alone I have encountered;
He must conceal himself, where all rejoice.
BURG. And who is conscious of such heavy guilt,
That of our favor he must needs despair?
JOHAN. May he approach? Oh, tell me that he may;
Complete thy merit. Void the reconcilement
That frees not the whole heart. A drop of hate
Remaining in the cup of joy converts
The blessed draught to poison. Let there be
No deed so stained with blood that Burgundy
Cannot forgive it on this day of joy.
BURG. Ha! now I understand!
JOHANNA. And thou'lt forgive?
Thou wilt indeed forgive? Come in, Duchatel!
[*She opens the door and leads in* DUCHATEL, *who remains standing at a distance.*
The duke is reconciled to all his foes,
And he is so to thee.
[DUCHATEL *approaches a few steps nearer, and tries to read the countenance of the* DUKE.
BURGUNDY. What makest thou
Of me, Johanna? Know'st thou what thou askest?
JOHAN. A gracious sovereign throws his portals wide,
Admitting every guest, excluding none;
As freely as the firmament the world,
So mercy must encircle friend and foe.
Impartially the sun pours forth his beams
Through all the regions of infinity;
The heaven's reviving dew falls everywhere,
And brings refreshment to each thirsty plant;

Whate'er is good, and cometh from on high,
Is universal, and without reserve;
But in the heart's recesses darkness dwells!

BURG. Oh, she can mould me to her wish; my heart
Is in her forming hand like melted wax.
— Duchatel, I forgive thee — come, embrace me!
Shade of my sire! oh, not with wrathful eye
Behold me clasp the hand that shed thy blood.
Ye death-gods, reckon not to my account,
That my dread oath of vengeance I abjure.
With you, in yon drear realm of endless night,
There beats no human heart, and all remains
Eternal, steadfast, and immovable.
Here in the light of day 'tis otherwise.
Man, living, feeling man, is aye the sport
Of the o'ermastering present.

CHARLES (*to* JOHANNA). Lofty maid!
What owe I not to thee! How truly now
Hast thou fulfilled thy word, — how rapidly
Reversed my destiny! Thou hast appeased
My friends, and in the dust o'erwhelmed my foes;
From foreign yoke redeemed my cities. Thou
Hast all achieved. Speak, how can I reward thee?

JOHAN. Sire, in prosperity be still humane,
As in misfortune thou hast ever been;
And on the height of greatness ne'er forget —
The value of a friend in times of need;
Thou hast approved it in adversity.
Refuse not to the lowest of thy people
The claims of justice and humanity,
For thy deliverer from the fold was called.
Beneath thy royal sceptre thou shalt gather
The realm entire of France. Thou shalt become
The root and ancestor of mighty kings;
Succeeding monarchs, in their regal state,
Shall those outshine, who filled the throne before
Thy stock, in majesty shall bloom so long
As it stands rooted in the people's love.
Pride only can achieve its overthrow,
And from the lowly station, whence to-day
God summoned thy deliverer, ruin dire
Obscurely threats thy crime-polluted sons!

BURG. Exalted maid! Possessed with sacred fire!
If thou canst look into the gulf of time,
Speak also of my race! Shall coming years
With ampler honors crown my princely line!
JOHAN. High as the throne, thou, Burgundy, hast built
Thy seat of power, and thy aspiring heart
Would raise still higher, even to the clouds,
The lofty edifice. But from on high
A hand omnipotent shall check its rise.
Fear thou not hence the downfall of thy house!
Its glory in a maiden shall survive;
Upon her breast shall sceptre-bearing kings,
The people's shepherds, bloom. Their ample sway
Shall o'er two realms extend, they shall ordain
Laws to control the known world, and the new,
Which God still veils behind the pathless waves.
CHAS. Oh, if the Spirit doth reveal it, speak;
Shall this alliance which we now renew
In distant ages still unite our sons?
JOHANNA (*after a pause*).
Sovereigns and kings! disunion shun with dread!
Wake not contention from the murky cave
Where he doth lie asleep, for once aroused
He cannot soon be quelled? He doth beget
An iron brood, a ruthless progeny;
Wildly the sweeping conflagration spreads.
— Be satisfied! Seek not to question further!
In the glad present let your hearts rejoice,
The future let me shroud!
SOREL. Exalted maid!
Thou canst explore my heart, thou readest there
If after worldly greatness it aspires,
To me to give a joyous oracle.
JOHAN. Of empires only I discern the doom;
In thine own bosom lies thy destiny!
DUNOIS. What, holy maid, will be thy destiny?
Doubtless, for thee, who art beloved of heaven,
The fairest earthly happiness shall bloom,
For thou art pure and holy.
JOHANNA. Happiness
Abideth yonder, with our God, in heaven.

CHAS. Thy fortune be henceforth thy monarch's care!
For I will glorify thy name in France,
And the remotest age shall call thee blest.
Thus I fulfil my word. Kneel down!
[*He draws his sword and touches her with it.*
And rise
A noble! I, thy monarch, from the dust
Of thy mean birth exalt thee. In the grave
Thy fathers I ennoble — thou shalt bear
Upon thy shield the *fleur-de-lis*, and be
Of equal lineage with the best in France.
Only the royal blood of Valois shall
Be nobler than thine own! The highest peer
Shall feel himself exalted by thy hand;
To wed thee nobly, maid, shall be my care.

DUNOIS (*advancing*).
My heart made choice of her when she was lowly.
The recent honor which encircles her,
Neither exalts her merit nor my love.
Here in my sovereign's presence, and before
This holy bishop, maid, I tender thee
My hand, and take thee as my princely wife,
If thou esteem me worthy to be thine.

CHAS. Resistless maiden! wonder thou dost add
To wonder! Yes, I now believe that naught's
Impossible to thee. Thou hast subdued
This haughty heart, which still hath scoffed till now
At love's omnipotence.

LA HIRE (*advancing*). If I have read
Aright Johanna's soul, her modest heart's
Her fairest jewel. She deserveth well
The homage of the great, but her desires
Soar not so high. She striveth not to reach
A giddy eminence; an honest heart's
True love contents her, and the quiet lot
Which with this hand I humbly proffer her.

CHAS. Thou, too, La Hire! two brave competitors, —
Peers in heroic virtue and renown!
— Wilt thou, who hast appeased mine enemies,
My realms united, part my dearest friends?
One only can possess her; I esteem

Each to be justly worthy such a prize.
Speak, maid! thy heart alone must here decide.

SOREL. The noble maiden is surprised, her cheek
Is crimsoned over with a modest blush.
Let her have leisure to consult her heart,
And in confiding friendship to unseal
Her long-closed bosom. Now the hour is come
When, with a sister's love, I also may
Approach the maid severe, and offer her
This silent, faithful breast. Permit us women
Alone to weigh this womanly affair;
Do you await the issue.

CHARLES (*about to retire*). Be it so!

JOHAN. No, sire, not so! the crimson on my cheek
Is not the blush of bashful modesty.
Naught have I for this noble lady's ear
Which in this presence I may not proclaim.
The choice of these brave knights much honors me,
But I did not forsake my shepherd-walks,
To chase vain worldly splendor, nor array
My tender frame in panoply of war,
To twine the bridal garland in my hair.
Far other labor is assigned to me,
Which a pure maiden can alone achieve.
I am the soldier of the Lord of Hosts,
And to no mortal man can I be wife.

ARCHB. To be a fond companion unto man
Is woman born — when nature she obeys,
Most wisely she fulfils high heaven's decree!
When His behest who called thee to the field
Shall be accomplished, thou'lt resign thy arms,
And once again rejoin the softer sex,
Whose gentle nature thou dost now forego,
And which from war's stern duties is exempt.

JOHAN. Most reverend sir! as yet I cannot say
What work the Spirit will enjoin on me.
But when the time comes round, his guiding voice
Will not be mute, and it I will obey.
Now he commands me to complete my task;
My royal master's brow is still uncrowned,

Still unanointed is his sacred head;
My sovereign cannot yet be called a king.

CHAS. We are advancing on the way to Rheims.

JOHAN. Let us not linger, for the enemy
Is planning how to intercept thy course:
I will conduct thee through the midst of them!

DUNOIS. And when thy holy mission is fulfilled,
When we in triumph shall have entered Rheims,
Wilt thou not then permit me, sacred maid ——

JOHAN. If heaven ordain that from the strife of death,
Crowned with the wreath of conquest, I return,
My task will be accomplished — and the maid
Hath thenceforth in the palace naught to do.

CHARLES (*taking her hand*).
It is the Spirit's voice impels thee now;
Love in thy bosom, heaven-inspired, is mute;
'Twill not be ever so; believe me, maid!
Our weapons will repose, and victory
Will by the hand lead forward gentle peace.
Joy will again return to every breast,
And softer feelings rest in every heart, —
They will awaken also in thy breast,
And tears of gentle longing thou wilt weep,
Such as thine eye hath never shed before;
— This heart, which heaven now occupies alone,
Will fondly open to an earthly friend —
Thousands thou hast till now redeemed and blessed,
Thou wilt at length conclude by blessing one!

JOHAN. Art weary, Dauphin, of the heavenly vision,
That thou its vessel wouldst annihilate?
The holy maiden, sent to thee by God,
Degrade, reducing her to common dust?
Ye blind of heart! Oh ye of little faith!
God's glory shines around you; to your gaze
He doth reveal his wonders, and ye see
Naught but a woman in me. Dare a woman
In iron panoply array herself,
And boldly mingle in the strife of men?
Woe, woe is me! if e'er my hand should wield
The avenging sword of God, and my vain heart
Cherish affection to a mortal man!

'Twere better for me I had ne'er been born!
Henceforth no more of this, unless ye would
Provoke the Spirit's wrath who in me dwells!
The eye of man, regarding me with love,
To me is horror and profanity.

CHAS. Forbear! It is in vain to urge her further.

JOHAN. Command the trumpets of the war to sound!
This stillness doth perplex and harass me;
An inward impulse drives me from repose,
It still impels me to achieve my work,
And sternly beckons me to meet my doom.

SCENE V.

A KNIGHT, *entering hastily.*

CHAS. What tidings? Speak!

KNIGHT. The foe has crossed the Marne,
And marshalleth his army for the fight.

JOHANNA (*inspired*).
Battle and tumult! Now my soul is free.
Arm, warriors, arm! while I prepare the troops.
[*She goes out.*

CHAS. Follow, La Hire! E'en at the gates of Rheims
They will compel us to dispute the crown!

DUNOIS. No genuine courage prompts them. This essay
Is the last effort of enraged despair.

CHAS. I do not urge you, duke. To-day's the time
To compensate the errors of the past.

BURG. You shall be satisfied with me.

CHARLES. Myself
Will march before you on the path of fame;
Here, with my royal town of Rheims in view,
I'll fight, and gallantry achieve the crown.
Thy knight, my Agnes, bids thee now farewell!

AGNES (*embracing him*).
I do not weep, I do not tremble for thee;
My faith, unshaken, cleaveth unto God!
Heaven, were we doomed to failure, had not given
So many gracious pledges of success!

My heart doth whisper me that, victory-crowned,
In conquered Rheims, I shall embrace my king.

[*Trumpets sound with a spirited tone, and while the scene is changing pass into a wild martial strain. When the scene opens, the orchestra joins in, accompanied by warlike instruments behind the scene.*

Scene VI.

The scene changes to an open country skirted with trees. During the music soldiers are seen retreating hastily across the background.

Talbot, *leaning on* Fastolfe, *and accompanied by soldiers. Soon after*, Lionel.

Talbot. Here lay me down beneath the trees, and then
Betake you back, with speed, unto the fight;
I need no aid to die.

Fastolfe. Oh, woful day! [Lionel *enters.*
Behold what sign awaits you, Lionel!
Here lies our general wounded unto death.

Lionel. Now, God forbid! My noble lord, arise!
No moment this to falter and to sink.
Yield not to death. By your all-powerful will
Command your ebbing spirit still to live.

Talbot. In vain! The day of destiny is come,
Which will o'erthrow the English power in France.
In desperate combat I have vainly risked
The remnant of our force to ward it off.
Struck by the thunderbolt I prostrate lie,
Never to rise again. Rheims now is lost,
Hasten to succor Paris!

Lionel. Paris is with the Dauphin reconciled;
A courier even now has brought the news.

Talbot (*tearing off his bandages*).
Then freely flow, ye currents of my blood,
For Talbot now is weary of the sun!

Lionel. I may no longer tarry: Fastolfe, haste!
Convey our leader to a place of safety.
No longer now can we maintain this post;
Our flying troops disperse on every side,
On, with resistless might, the maiden comes.

TALBOT. Folly, thou conquerest, and I must yield!
Against stupidity the very gods
Themselves contend in vain. Exalted reason,
Resplendent daughter of the head divine,
Wise foundress of the system of the world,
Guide of the stars, who art thou then if thou,
Bound to the tail of folly's uncurbed steed,
Must, vainly shrieking with the drunken crowd,
Eyes open, plunge down headlong in the abyss.
Accursed, who striveth after noble ends,
And with deliberate wisdom forms his plans!
To the fool-king belongs the world.

LIONEL. My lord,
But for a few brief moments can you live —
Think of your Maker!

TALBOT. Had we, like brave men,
Been vanquished by the brave, we might, indeed,
Console ourselves that 'twas the common lot;
For fickle fortune aye revolves her wheel.
But to be baffled by such juggling arts!
Deserved our earnest and laborious life
Not a more earnest issue?

LIONEL (*extends his hand to him*). Fare you well!
The debt of honest tears I will discharge
After the battle — if I then survive.
Now Fate doth call me hence, where on the field
Her web she waveth, and dispenseth doom.
We in another world shall meet again;
For our long friendship, this a brief farewell. [*Exit.*

TALBOT. Soon is the struggle past, and to the earth,
To the eternal sun, I render back
These atoms, joined in me for pain and pleasure.
And of the mighty Talbot, who the world
Filled with his martial glory, there remains
Naught save a modicum of senseless dust.
Such is the end of man — the only spoil
We carry with us from life's battle-field,
Is but an insight into nothingness,
And utter scorn of all which once appeared
To us exalted and desirable.

Scene VII.

Charles, Burgundy, Dunois, Duchatel, *and Soldiers.*

Burg. The trench is stormed!
Dunois. The victory is ours!
Charles (*perceiving* Talbot.)
Look! Who is he, who yonder of the sun
Taketh reluctant, sorrowful farewell?
His armor indicates no common man;
Go, succor him, if aid may yet avail.
[*Soldiers of the* King's *retinue step forward.*
Fastol. Back! Stand apart! Respect the mighty dead,
Whom ye in life ne'er ventured to approach!
Burg. What do I see? Lord Talbot in his blood!
[*He approaches him.* Talbot *gazes fixedly at him, and dies.*
Fastol. Traitor, avaunt! Let not the sight of thee
Poison the dying hero's parting glance.
Dunois. Resistless hero! Dread-inspiring Talbot!
Does such a narrow space suffice thee now,
And this vast kingdom could not satisfy
The large ambition of thy giant soul!
Now first I can salute you, sire, as king:
The diadem but tottered on your brow,
While yet a spirit tenanted this clay.
Charles (*after contemplating the body in silence*).
A higher power hath vanquished him, not we!
He lies upon the soil of France, as lies
The hero on the shield he would not quit.
Well, peace be with his ashes! Bear him hence!
[*Soldiers take up the body and carry it away*
Here in the heart of France, where his career
Of conquest ended, let his relics lie!
So far no hostile sword attained before.
A fitting tomb shall memorize his name;
His epitaph the spot whereon he fell.
Fastolfe (*yielding his sword*).
I am your prisoner, sir.
Charles (*returning his sword*). Not so! Rude war
Respects each pious office; you are free

To render the last honors to the dead,
Go now, Duchatel — still my Agnes trembles —
Hasten to snatch her from anxiety —
Bring her the tidings of our victory,
And usher her in triumph into Rheims!

[*Exit* DUCHATEL.

SCENE VIII.

The same. LA HIRE.

DUNOIS. La Hire, where is the maiden?
LA HIRE. That I ask
Of you; I left her fighting by your side.
DUNOIS. I thought she was protected by your arm,
When I departed to assist the king.
BURG. Not long ago I saw her banner wave
Amidst the thickest of the hostile ranks.
DUNOIS. Alas! where is she? Evil I forebode?
Come, let us haste to rescue her. I fear
Her daring soul hath led her on too far;
Alone she combats in the midst of foes,
And without succor yieldeth to the crowd.
CHAS. Haste to her rescue!
LA HIRE. Come!
BURGUNDY. We follow all! [*Exit.*

[*They retire in haste.*

A deserted part of the battle-field. In the distance are seen the towers of Rheims illumined by the sun.

SCENE IX.

A KNIGHT *in black armor, with closed visor.* JOHANNA *follows him to the front of the stage, where he stops and awaits her.*

JOHAN. Deluder! now I see thy stratagem!
Thou hast deceitfully, through seeming flight,
Allured me from the battle, doom and death
Averting thus from many a British head.
Destruction now doth overtake thyself.
KNIGHT. Why dost thou follow after me and track

My steps with quenchless rage? I am not doomed
To perish by thy hand.

JOHANNA. Deep in my soul
I hate thee as the night, which is thy color;
To blot thee out from the fair light of day
An irresistible desire impels me.
Who art thou? Raise thy visor. I had said
That thou wert Talbot had I not myself
Seen warlike Talbot in the battle fall.

KNIGHT. Is the divining-spirit mute in thee?

JOHAN. His voice speaks loudly in my spirit's depth
The near approach of woe.

BLACK KNIGHT. Johanna D'Arc!
Borne on the wings of conquest, thou hast reached
The gates of Rheims. Let thy achieved renown
Content thee. Fortune, like thy slave, till now
Hath followed thee; dismiss her, ere in wrath
She free herself; fidelity she hates;
She serveth none with constancy till death.

JOHAN. Why check me in the midst of my career?
Why bid me falter and forsake my work?
I will complete it and fulfil my vow!

KNIGHT. Nothing can thee, thou mighty one, withstand,
In battle thou art aye invincible.
But henceforth shun the fight; attend my warning.

JOHAN. Not from my hand will I resign this sword
Till haughty England's prostrate in the dust.

KNIGHT. Behold! there Rheims ariseth with its towers,
The goal and end of thy career. Thou seest
The lofty minster's sun-illumined dome;
Thou in triumphal pomp wouldst enter there,
Thy monarch crown, and ratify thy vow.
Enter not there! Return! Attend my warning!

JOHAN. What art thou, double-tongued, deceitful being,
Who wouldst bewilder and appal me? Speak!
By what authority dost thou presume
To greet me with fallacious oracles?

[*The* BLACK KNIGHT *is about to depart, she steps in his way.*

No, thou shalt speak, or perish by my hand!

[*She endeavors to strike him.*

BLACK KNIGHT (*touches her with his hand, she remains motionless*).

Slay what is mortal!

[*Darkness, thunder and lightning.* *The* KNIGHT *sinks into the earth.*

JOHANNA (*stands at first in amazement, but soon recovers herself*).

'Twas nothing living. 'Twas a base delusion,
An instrument of hell, a juggling fiend,
Uprisen hither from the fiery pool
To shake and terrify my steadfast heart.
Wielding the sword of God, whom should I fear!
I will triumphantly achieve my work.
My courage should not waver, should not fail
Were hell itself to champion me to fight!

[*She is about to depart.*

SCENE X.

LIONEL, JOHANNA.

LIONEL. Accursed one, prepare thee for the fight!
Not both of us shall quit this field alive.
Thou hast destroyed the bravest of our host:
The noble Talbot hath his mighty soul
Breathed forth upon my bosom. I'll avenge
The hero, or participate his doom.
And wouldst thou know who brings thee glory now,
Whether he live or die, — I'm Lionel,
The sole survivor of the English chiefs,
And still unconquered is this valiant arm.

[*He rushes upon her; after a short combat she strikes the sword out of his hand.*

Perfidious fortune!

[*He wrestles with her.* JOHANNA *seizes him by the crest and tears open his helmet; his face is thus exposed; at the same time she draws her sword with her right hand.*

JOHANNA. Suffer what thou soughtest!
The Virgin sacrifices thee through me!

[*At this moment she gazes in his face. His aspect softens her, she remains motionless and slowly lets her arm sink.*

LIONEL. Why linger, why withhold the stroke of death?
My glory thou hast taken — take my life!
I want no mercy, I am in thy power.
[*She makes him a sign with her hand to fly.*
How! shall I fly and owe my life to thee?
No, I would rather die.
JOHANNA (*with averted face*). I will not know
That ever thou didst owe thy life to me.
LIONEL. I hate alike thee and thy proffered gift.
I want no mercy — kill thine enemy
Who loathes and would have slain thee.
JOHANNA. Slay me, then,
And fly!
LIONEL. Ha! What is this?
JOHANNA (*hiding her face*). Woe's me!
LIONEL (*approaching her*). 'Tis said
Thou killest all the English whom thy sword
Subdues in battle — why spare me alone?
JOHANNA (*raises her sword with a rapid movement as if to strike him, but lets it fall quickly when she gazes on his face*).
Oh, Holy Virgin!
LIONEL. Wherefore namest thou
The Holy Virgin? she knows naught of thee;
Heaven hath no part in thee.
JOHANNA (*in the greatest anxiety*). What have I done?
Alas! I have broke my vow!
[*She wrings her hands in despair.*
LIONEL (*looks at her with sympathy and approaches her*).
Unhappy maid!
I pity thee! Thy sorrow touches me;
Thou hast shown mercy unto me alone,
My hatred yielded unto sympathy!
Who art thou, and whence comest thou?
JOHANNA. Away!
LIONEL. Thy youth, thy beauty, move my soul to pity!
Thy look sinks in my heart. I fain would save thee!
How may I do so? tell me. Come! oh, come!
Renounce this fearful league — throw down these arms!
JOHAN. I am unworthy now to carry them!

LIONEL. Then throw them from thee — quick! come, follow me!

JOHANNA (*with horror*).
How! follow thee!

LIONEL. Thou may'st be saved. Oh, come!
I will deliver thee, but linger not.
Strange sorrow for thy sake doth seize my heart,
Unspeakable desire to rescue thee ——
[*He seizes her arm.*

JOHAN. The Bastard comes! 'Tis they! They seek for me!
If they should find thee ——

LIONEL. I'll defend thee, maid.

JOHAN. I die if thou shouldst perish by their hands!

LIONEL. Am I then dear to thee?

JOHANNA. Ye heavenly powers!

LIONEL. Shall I again behold thee — hear from thee?

JOHAN. No! never!

LIONEL. Thus this sword I seize in pledge
That I again behold thee!
[*He snatches her sword.*

JOHANNA. Madman, hold!
Thou darest?

LIONEL. Now I yield to force — again
I'll see thee! [*He retires.*

SCENE XI.

JOHANNA, DUNOIS, LA HIRE.

LA HIRE. It is she! The maiden lives!

DUNOIS. Fear not, Johanna! friends are at thy side.

HIRE. Is not that Lionel who yonder flies?

DUNOIS. Let him escape! Maiden, the righteous cause
Hath triumphed now. Rheims opens wide its gates;
The joyous crowds pour forth to meet their king.

HIRE. What ails thee, maiden? She grows pale — she sinks!
[JOHANNA *grows dizzy, and is about to fall.*

DUNOIS. She's wounded — rend her breastplate — 'tis her arm!
The wound is not severe.

LA HIRE. Her blood doth flow.
JOHAN. Oh, that my life would stream forth with my blood! [*She lies senseless in* LA HIRE'S *arms.*

ACT IV.

A hall adorned as for a festival; the columns are hung with garlands; behind the scene flutes and hautboys.

SCENE I.

JOHAN. Hushed is the din of arms, war's storms subside,
Glad songs and dance succeed the bloody fray,
Through all the streets joy echoes far and wide,
Altar and church are decked in rich array,
Triumphal arches rise in vernal pride,
Wreathes round the columns wind their flowery way,
Wide Rheims cannot contain the mighty throng,
Which to the joyous pageant rolls along.

One thought alone doth every heart possess,
One rapt'rous feeling o'er each breast preside.
And those to-day are linked in happiness
Whom bloody hatred did erewhile divide.
All who themselves of Gallic race confess
The name of Frenchman own with conscious pride,
France sees the splendor of her ancient crown,
And to her monarch's son bows humbly down.

Yet I, the author of this wide delight,
The joy, myself created, cannot share;
My heart is changed, in sad and dreary plight
It flies the festive pageant in despair;
Still to the British camp it taketh flight,
Against my will my gaze still wanders there,
And from the throng I steal, with grief oppressed,
To hide the guilt which weighs upon my breast.

What! I permit a human form
To haunt my bosom's sacred cell?

And there, where heavenly radiance shone,
Doth earthly love presume to dwell?
The savior of my country, I,
The warrior of God most high,
Burn for my country's foeman? Dare I name
Heaven's holy light, nor feel o'erwhelmed with shame?

[*The music behind the scene passes into a soft and moving melody.*

Woe is me! Those melting tones!
They distract my 'wildered brain!
Every note, his voice recalling,
Conjures up his form again!

Would that spears were whizzing round!
Would that battle's thunder roared!
Midst the wild tumultuous sound
My former strength were then restored.

These sweet tones, these melting voices,
With seductive power are fraught!
They dissolve, in gentle longing,
Every feeling, every thought,
Waking tears of plaintive sadness.

[*After a pause, with more energy.*
Should I have killed him? Could I, when I gazed
Upon his face? Killed him? Oh, rather far
Would I have turned my weapon 'gainst myself!
And am I culpable because humane?
Is pity sinful? Pity! Didst thou hear
The voice of pity and humanity
When others fell the victims of thy sword?
Why was she silent when the gentle youth
From Wales entreated thee to spare his life?
Oh, cunning heart! Thou liest before high heaven!
It is not pity's voice impels thee now!
Why was I doomed to look into his eyes!
To mark his noble features! With that glance,
Thy crime, thy woe commenced. Unhappy one!

A sightless instrument thy God demands,
Blindly thou must accomplish his behest!
When thou didst see, God's shield abandoned thee,
And the dire snares of hell around thee pressed!

[*Flutes are again heard, and she subsides into a quiet melancholy.*

Harmless staff! Oh, that I ne'er
Had for the sword abandoned thee!
Had voices never reached mine ear,
From thy branches, sacred tree!
High queen of heaven! Oh, would that thou
Hadst ne'er revealed thyself to me!
Take back — I dare not claim it now —
Take back thy crown, 'tis not for me!

I saw the heavens open wide,
I gazed upon that face of love!
Yet here on earth my hopes abide,
They do not dwell in heaven above!
Why, Holy One, on me impose
This dread vocation? Could I steel,
And to each soft emotion close
This heart, by nature formed to feel?

Wouldst thou proclaim thy high command,
Make choice of those who, free from sin,
In thy eternal mansions stand;
Send forth thy flaming cherubim!
Immortal ones, thy law they keep,
They do not feel, they do not weep!
Choose not a tender woman's aid,
Not the frail soul of shepherd maid!

Was I concerned with warlike things,
With battles or the strife of kings?
In innocence I led my sheep
Adown the mountain's silent steep,
But thou didst send me into life,
'Midst princely halls and scenes of strife,
To lose my spirit's tender bloom:
Alas, I did not seek my doom!

Scene II.

Agnes Sorel, Johanna.

Sorel (*advances joyfully. When she perceives* Johanna *she hastens to her and falls upon her neck; then suddenly recollecting herself, she relinquishes her hold, and falls down before her*).

No! no! not so! Before thee in the dust ——

Johanna (*trying to raise her*).

Arise! Thou dost forget thyself and me.

Sorel. Forbid me not! 'tis the excess of joy
Which throws me at thy feet — I must pour forth
My o'ercharged heart in gratitude to God;
I worship the Invisible in thee.
Thou art the angel who has led my lord
To Rheims, to crown him with the royal crown.
What I ne'er dreamed to see is realized!
The coronation march will soon set forth;
Arrayed in festal pomp the monarch stands;
Assembled are the nobles of the realm,
The mighty peers to bear the insignia;
To the cathedral rolls the billowy crowd;
Glad songs resound, the bells unite their peal:
Oh, this excess of joy I cannot bear!

[Johanna *gently raises her.* Agnes Sorel *pauses a moment, and surveys the* Maiden *more narrowly.*

Yet thou remainest ever grave and stern;
Thou canst create delight, yet share it not.
Thy heart is cold, thou feelest not our joy,
Thou hast beheld the glories of the skies;
No earthly interest moveth thy pure breast.

[Johanna *seizes her hand passionately, but soon lets it fall again.*

Oh, couldst thou own a woman's feeling heart!
Put off this armor, war is over now,
Confess thy union with the softer sex!
My loving heart shrinks timidly from thee,
While thus thou wearest Pallas' brow severe.

Johan. What wouldst thou have me do?

Sorel. Unarm thyself!
Put off this coat of mail! The God of Love

Fears to approach a bosom clad in steel.
Oh, be a woman, thou wilt feel his power!

JOHAN. What, now unarm myself? Midst battle's roar
I'll bare my bosom to the stroke of death!
Not now! Would that a sevenfold wall of brass
Could hide me from your revels, from myself!

SOREL. Thou'rt loved by Count Dunois. His noble heart,
Which virtue and renown alone inspire,
With pure and holy passion glows for thee.
Oh, it is sweet to know oneself beloved
By such a hero — sweeter still to love him!

[JOHANNA *turns away with aversion.*

Thou hatest him? — no, no, thou only canst
Not love him: — how could hatred stir thy breast!
Those who would tear us from the one we love,
We hate alone; but none can claim thy love.
Thy heart is tranquil — if it could but feel ——

JOHAN. Oh, pity me! Lament my hapless fate!

SOREL. What can be wanting to complete thy joy?
Thou hast fulfilled thy promise, France is free,
To Rheims, in triumph, thou hast led the king,
Thy mighty deeds have gained thee high renown,
A happy people praise and worship thee;
Thy name, the honored theme of every tongue;
Thou art the goddess of this festival;
The monarch, with his crown and regal state,
Shines not with greater majesty than thou!

JOHAN. Oh, could I hide me in the depths of earth!

SOREL. Why this emotion? Whence this strange distress?
Who may to-day look up without a fear,
If thou dost cast thine eyes upon the ground!
It is for me to blush, me, who near thee
Feel all my littleness; I cannot reach
Thy lofty virtue, thy heroic strength!
For — all my weakness shall I own to thee?
Not the renown of France, my Fatherland,
Not the new splendor of the monarch's crown,
Not the triumphant gladness of the crowds,
Engage this woman's heart. One only form
Is in its depths enshrined; it hath not room

For any feeling save for one alone:
He is the idol, him the people bless,
Him they extol, for him they strew these flowers,
And he is mine, he is my own true love!

JOHAN. Oh, thou art happy! thou art blessed indeed!
Thou lovest, where all love. Thou may'st, unblamed
Pour forth thy rapture, and thine inmost heart,
Fearless discover to the gaze of man!
Thy country's triumph is thy lover's too.
The vast, innumerable multitudes,
Who, rolling onward, crowd within these walls,
Participate thy joy, they hallow it;
Thee they salute, for thee they twine the wreath,
Thou art a portion of the general joy;
Thou lovest the all-inspiring soul, the sun,
And what thou seest is thy lover's glory!

SOREL (*falling on her neck*).
Thou dost delight me, thou canst read my heart!
I did thee wrong, thou knowest what love is,
Thou tell'st my feelings with a voice of power.
My heart forgets its fear and its reserve,
And seeks confidingly to blend with thine ——

JOHANNA (*tearing herself from her with violence*).
Forsake me! Turn away! Do not pollute
Thyself by longer intercourse with me!
Be happy! go — and in the deepest night
Leave me to hide my infamy, my woe!

SOREL. Thou frighten'st me, I understand thee not,
I ne'er have understood thee — for from me
Thy dark mysterious being still was veiled.
Who may divine what thus disturbs thy heart,
Thus terrifies thy pure and sacred soul!

JOHAN. Thou art the pure, the holy one! Couldst thou
Behold mine inmost heart, thou, shuddering,
Wouldst fly the traitoress, the enemy!

SCENE III.

DUNOIS, DUCHATEL, *and* LA HIRE, *with the banner of* JOHANNA.

DUNOIS. Johanna, thee we seek. All is prepared;
The king hath sent us, 'tis his royal will

That thou before him shouldst thy banner bear,
The company of princes thou shalt join,
And march immediately before the king:
For he doth not deny it, and the world
Shall witness, maiden, that to thee alone
He doth ascribe the honor of this day.

HIRE. Here is the banner. Take it, noble maiden
Thou'rt stayed for by the princes and the people.

JOHAN. I march before him? I the banner bear?

DUNOIS. Whom else would it become? What other hand
Is pure enough to bear the sacred ensign!
Amid the battle thou hast waved it oft;
To grace our glad procession bear it now.

[LA HIRE *presents the banner to her, she draws back, shuddering.*

JOHAN. Away! away!

LA HIRE. How! Art thou terrified
At thine own banner, maiden? Look at it!
[*He displays the banner*
It is the same thou didst in conquest wave.
Imaged upon it is the queen of heaven,
Floating in glory o'er this earthly ball;
For so the Holy Mother showed it thee.
[JOHANNA *gazing upon it with horror.*
'Tis she herself! so she appeared to me.
See, how she looks at me and knits her brow,
And anger flashes from her threatening eye!

SOREL. Alas, she raveth! Maiden, be composed!
Collect thyself! Thou seest nothing real!
That is her pictured image; she herself
Wanders above, amid the angelic choir!

JOHAN. Thou comest, fearful one, to punish me?
Destroy, o'erwhelm, thine arrowy lightnings hurl
And let them fall upon my guilty head.
Alas, my vow I've broken! I've profaned
And desecrated thy most holy name!

DUNOIS. Woe's us! What may this mean? What unblest words?

LA HIRE (*in astonishment, to* DUCHATEL).
This strange emotion canst thou comprehend?

DUCHAT. That which I see, I see — I long have feared it.
DUNOIS. What sayest thou?
DUCHATEL. I dare not speak my thoughts.
I would to heaven that the king were crowned!
HIRE. How! hath the awe this banner doth inspire
Turned back upon thyself? before this sign
Let Britons tremble; to the foes of France
'Tis fearful, but to all true citizens
It is auspicious.
JOHANNA. Yes, thou sayest truly!
To friends 'tis gracious! but to enemies
It causeth horror!
[*The Coronation march is heard.*
DUNOIS. Take thy banner, then!
The march begins — no time is to be lost!
[*They press the banner upon her; she seizes it with evident emotion, and retires; the others follow.*
[*The scene changes to an open place before the Cathedral.*

SCENE IV.

Spectators occupy the background; BERTRAND, CLAUDE MARIE, *and* ETIENNE *come forward; then* MARGOT *and* LOUISON. *The Coronation march is heard in the distance.*

BERT. Hark to the music! They approach already!
What had we better do? Shall we mount up
Upon the platform, or press through the crowd,
That we may nothing lose of the procession?
ETIEN. It is not to be thought of. All the streets
Are thronged with horsemen and with carriages.
Beside these houses let us take our stand
Here we without annoyance may behold
The train as it goes by.
CLAUDE MARIE. Almost it seems
As were the half of France assembled here
So mighty is the flood that it hath reached
Even our distant Lotharingian land
And borne us thither!
BERTRAND. Who would sit at home
When great events are stirring in the land!

It hath cost plenty, both of sweat and blood
Ere the crown rested on its rightful head!
Nor shall our lawful king, to whom we give
The crown, be worse accompanied than he
Whom the Parisians in St. Denis crowned!
He is no loyal, honest-minded man
Who doth absent him from this festival,
And joins not in the cry: "God save the King"!

Scene V.

MARGOT *and* LOUISON *join them.*

LOUIS. We shall again behold our sister, Margot!
How my heart beats!
MARGOT. In majesty and pomp
We shall behold her, saying to ourselves:
It is our sister, it is our Johanna!
LOUIS. Till I have seen her, I can scarce believe
That she, whom men the Maid of Orleans name,
The mighty warrior, is indeed Johanna,
Our sister whom we lost!
[*The music draws nearer.*
MARGOT. Thou doubtest still!
Thou wilt thyself behold her!
BERTRAND. See, they come!

Scene VI.

Musicians, with flutes and hautboys, open the procession. Children follow, dressed in white, with branches in their hands; behind them two heralds. Then a procession of halberdiers, followed by magistrates in their robes. Then two marshals with their staves; the DUKE *of* BURGUNDY, *bearing the sword;* DUNOIS *with the sceptre, other nobles with the regalia; others with sacrificial offerings. Behind these,* KNIGHTS *with the ornaments of their order; choristers with incense; two* BISHOPS *with the ampulla; the* ARCHBISHOP *with the crucifix.* JOHANNA *follows, with her banner, she walks with downcast head and wavering steps; her sisters, on beholding her, express their astonishment and joy. Behind her comes the* KING *under a canopy, supported by four barons; courtiers follow, soldiers conclude the procession; as soon as it has entered the church the music ceases.*

Scene VII.

Louison, Margot, Claude Marie, Etienne, Bertrand.

Marg. Saw you our sister?
Claude Marie. She in golden armor,
Who with the banner walked before the king?
Marg. It was Johanna. It was she, our sister!
Louis. She recognized us not! She did not feel
That we, her sisters, were so near to her.
She looked upon the ground, and seemed so pale,
And trembled so beneath her banner's weight —
When I beheld her, I could not rejoice.
Marg. So now, arrayed in splendor and in pomp,
I have beheld our sister — who in dreams
Would ever have imagined or conceived,
When on our native hills she drove the flock,
That we should see her in such majesty?
Louis. Our father's dream is realized, that we
In Rheims before our sister should bow down.
That is the church, which in his dream he saw
And each particular is now fulfilled.
But images of woe he also saw!
Alas! I'm grieved to see her raised so high!
Bert. Why stand we idly here? Let's to the church
To view the coronation!
Margot. Yes! perchance
We there may meet our sister; let us go!
Louis. We have beheld her. Let us now return
Back to our village.
Margot. How? Ere we with her
Have interchanged a word?
Louison. She doth belong
To us no longer; she with princes stands
And monarchs. Who are we, that we should seek
With foolish vanity to near her state?
She was a stranger while she dwelt with us!
Marg. Will she despise, and treat us with contempt?
Bert. The king himself is not ashamed of us,
He kindly greets the meanest of the crowd.

How high soever she may be exalted,
The king is raised still higher!

[*Trumpets and kettle-drums are heard from the church.*

CLAUDE MARIE. Let's to the church!

[*They hasten to the background, where they are lost among the crowd.*

SCENE VIII.

THIBAUT *enters, clad in black.* RAIMOND *follows him, and tries to hold him back.*

RAIM. Stay, father Thibaut! Do not join the crowds!
Here, at this joyous festival you meet
None but the happy, whom your grief offends.
Come! Let us quit the town with hasty steps.

THIB. Hast thou beheld my child? My wretched child?
Didst thou observe her?

RAIMOND. I entreat you, fly!

THIB. Didst mark her tottering and uncertain steps,
Her countenance, so pallid and disturbed?
She feels her dreadful state; the hour is come
To save my child, and I will not neglect it.

[*He is about to retire.*

RAIM. What would you do?

THIBAUT. Surprise her, hurl her down
From her vain happiness, and forcibly
Restore her to the God whom she denies.

RAIM. Oh, do not work the ruin of your child!

THIB. If her soul lives, her mortal part may die.

[JOHANNA *rushes out of the church, without her banner. The people press around her, worship her, and kiss her garments. She is detained in the background by the crowd.*

She comes! 'tis she! She rushes from the church.
Her troubled conscience drives her from the fane!
'Tis visibly the judgment of her God!

RAIM. Farewell! Require not my attendance further!
Hopeful I came, and sorrowful depart.
Your daughter once again I have beheld,
And feel again that she is lost to me!

[*He goes out.* THIBAUT *retires on the opposite side.*

Scene IX.

JOHANNA, *People. Afterwards her Sisters.*

JOHANNA (*she has freed herself from the crowd and comes forward*).

Remain I cannot — spirits chase me forth!
The organ's pealing tones like thunder sound,
The dome's arched roof threatens to overwhelm me!
I must escape and seek heaven's wide expanse!
I left my banner in the sanctuary,
Never, oh, never, will I touch it more!
It seemed to me as if I had beheld
My sisters pass before me like a dream.
'Twas only a delusion! — they, alas!
Are far, far distant — inaccessible —
E'en as my childhood, as mine innocence!

MARGOT (*stepping forward*).

'Tis she! It is Johanna!

LOUISON (*hastening toward her*). Oh, my sister!

JOHAN. Then it was no delusion — you are here —
Thee I embrace, Louison! Thee, my Margot?
Here in this strange and crowded solitude,
I clasp once more my sisters' faithful breasts!

MARG. She knows us still, she is our own kind sister.

JOHAN. Your love hath led you to me here so far!
So very far! You are not wroth with her
Who left her home without one parting word!

LOUIS. God's unseen providence conducted thee.

MARG. Thy great renown, which agitates the world,
Which makes thy name the theme of every tongue,
Hath in our quiet village wakened us,
And led us hither to this festival.
To witness all thy glory we are come;
And we are not alone!

JOHANNA (*quickly*). Our father's here!
Where is he? Why doth he conceal himself?

MARG. Our father is not with us.

JOHANNA. Not with you?
He will not see me, then! You do not bring
His blessing for his child?

LOUISON. He knoweth not
That we are here.
JOHANNA. Not know it! Wherefore not?
You are embarrassed, and you do not speak;
You look upon the ground! Where is our father?
MARG. Since thou hast left ——
LOUISON (*making a sign to* MARGOT). Margot!
MARGOT. Our father hath
Become dejected.
JOHANNA. Ah!
LOUISON. Console thyself!
Our sire's foreboding spirit well thou knowest!
He will collect himself, and be composed,
When he shall learn from us that thou art happy.
MARG. And thou art happy? Yes, it must be so,
For thou art great and honored!
JOHANNA. I am so,
Now I again behold you, once again
Your voices hear, whose fond, familiar tones
Bring to my mind my dear paternal fields.
When on my native hills I drove my herd,
Then I was happy as in paradise —
I ne'er can be so more, no, never more!
[*She hides her face on* LOUISON'S *bosom.* CLAUDE MARIE, ETIENNE, *and* BERTRAND *appear, and remain timidly standing in the distance.*
MARG. Come, Bertrand! Claude Marie! come, Etienne!
Our sister is not proud: she is so gentle,
And speaks so kindly, —more so than of yore,
When in our village she abode with us.
[*They draw near, and hold out their hands;* JOHANNA *gazes on them fixedly, and appears amazed.*
JOHAN. Where am I? Tell me! Was it all a dream,
A long, long dream? And am I now awake?
Am I away from Dom Remi? Is't so?
I fell asleep beneath the Druid tree,
And I am now awake; and round me stand
The kind, familiar forms? I only dreamed
Of all these battles, kings, and deeds of war, —
They were but shadows which before me passed;
For dreams are always vivid 'neath that tree.

How did you come to Rheims? How came I here?
No, I have never quitted Dom Remi!
Confess it to me, and rejoice my heart.

LOUIS. We are at Rheims. Thou hast not merely dreamed
Of these great deeds — thou hast achieved them all.
Come to thyself, Johanna! Look around —
Thy splendid armor feel, of burnished gold!

[JOHANNA *lays her hand upon her breast, recollects herself, and shrinks back.*

BERT. Out of my hand thou didst receive this helm.

MARIE. No wonder thou shouldst think it all a dream;
For nothing in a dream could come to pass
More wonderful than what thou hast achieved.

JOHANNA (*quickly*).
Come, let us fly! I will return with you
Back to our village, to our father's bosom.

LOUIS. Oh, come! Return with us!

JOHANNA. The people here
Exalt me far above what I deserve.
You have beheld me weak and like a child;
You love me, but you do not worship me.

MARG. Thou wilt abandon this magnificence.

JOHAN. I will throw off the hated ornaments
Which were a barrier 'twixt my heart and yours,
And I will be a shepherdess again,
And like a humble maiden I will serve you,
And will with bitter penitence atone,
That I above you vainly raised myself.

[*Trumpets sound.*

SCENE X.

The KING *comes forth from the church. He is in the coronation robes.* AGNES SOREL, ARCHBISHOP, BURGUNDY, DUNOIS, LA HIRE, DUCHATEL, KNIGHTS, COURTIERS, *and* PEOPLE.

Many voices shout repeatedly, while the KING *advances,* —
Long live the king! Long live King Charles the Seventh!

[*The trumpets sound. Upon a signal from the* KING, *the* HERALDS *with their staves command silence.*

KING. Thanks, my good people! Thank you for your love!
The crown which God hath placed upon our brow
Hath with our valiant swords been hardly won:
With noble blood 'tis wetted; but henceforth
The peaceful olive branch shall round it twine.
Let those who fought for us receive our thanks;
Our pardon, those who joined the hostile ranks,
For God hath shown us mercy in our need,
And our first royal word shall now be, mercy!

PEOPLE. Long live the king! Long live King Charles the good!

KING. From God alone, the highest potentate,
The monarchs of the French receive the crown;
But visibly from his Almighty hand
Have we received it. [*Turning to the* MAIDEN.
Here stands the holy delegate of heaven,
Who hath restored to you your rightful king,
And rent the yoke of foreign tyranny.
Her name shall equal that of holy Denis,
The guardian and protector of this realm,
And to her fame an altar shall be reared.

PEOPLE. Hail to the maiden, the deliverer! [*Trumpets.*

KING (*to* JOHANNA).
If thou art born of woman, like ourselves,
Name aught that can augment thy happiness.
But if thy fatherland is there above,
If in this virgin form thou dost conceal
The radiant glory of a heavenly nature,
From our deluded sense remove the veil,
And let us see thee in thy form of light
As thou art seen in heaven, that in the dust
We may bow down before thee.

[*A general silence; every eye is fixed upon the* MAIDEN.

JOHANNA (*with a sudden cry*). God! my father!

SCENE XI.

THIBAUT *comes forth from the crowd, and stands opposite to her. Many voices exclaim,—*

Her father!

THIBAUT. Yes, her miserable father,

Who did beget her, and whom God impels
Now to accuse his daughter.

BURGUNDY. Ha! What's this?

DUCHAT. Now will the fearful truth appear!

THIBAUT (*to the* KING). Thou think'st
That thou art rescued through the power of God?
Deluded prince! Deluded multitude!
Ye have been rescued through the arts of hell!
[*All step back with horror.*

DUNOIS. Is this man mad?

THIBAUT. Not I, but thou art mad.
And this wise bishop, and these noble lords,
Who think that through a weak and sinful maid
The God of heaven would reveal himself.
Come, let us see if to her father's face
She will maintain the specious, juggling arts
Wherewith she hath deluded king and people.
Now, in the name of the blest Trinity,
Belong'st thou to the pure and holy ones?

[*A general silence; all eyes are fixed upon her; she remains motionless.*

SOREL. God! she is dumb!

THIBAUT. Before that awful name,
Which even in the depths of hell is feared,
She must be silent! She a holy one,
By God commissioned? On a cursed spot
It was conceived; beneath the Druid tree
Where evil spirits have from olden time
Their sabbath held. There her immortal soul
She bartered with the enemy of man
For transient, worldly glory. Let her bare
Her arm, and ye will see impressed thereon
The fatal marks of hell!

BURGUNDY. Most horrible!
Yet we must needs believe a father's words
Who 'gainst his daughter gives his evidence.

DUNOIS. The madman cannot be believed
Who in his child brings shame upon himself.

SOREL (*to* JOHANNA).
Oh, maiden, speak! this fatal silence break!
We firmly trust thee! we believe in thee!

One syllable from thee, one single word
Shall be sufficient. Speak! annihilate
This horrid accusation. But declare
Thine innocence, and we will all believe thee.

[JOHANNA *remains motionless;* AGNES *steps back with horror.*

HIRE. She's frightened. Horror and astonishment
Impede her utterance. Before a charge
So horrible e'en innocence must tremble.

[*He approaches her.*

Collect thyself, Johanna! innocence
Hath a triumphant look, whose lightning flash
Strikes slander to the earth! In noble wrath
Arise! look up, and punish this base doubt,
An insult to thy holy innocence.

[JOHANNA *remains motionless;* LA HIRE *steps back; the excitement increases.*

DUNOIS. Why do the people fear, the princes tremble?
I'll stake my honor on her innocence!
Here on the ground I throw my knightly gage;
Who now will venture to maintain her guilt?

[*A loud clap of thunder; all are horror-struck.*

THIB. Answer, by Him whose thunders roll above!
Give me the lie! Proclaim thine innocence;
Say that the enemy hath not thy heart!

[*Another clap of thunder, louder than the first; the people fly on all sides.*

BURG. God guard and save us! What appalling signs!

DUCHATEL (*to the* KING).

Come, come, my king! Forsake this fearful place!

ARCHBISHOP (*to* JOHANNA).

I ask thee in God's name. Art thou thus silent
From consciousness of innocence or guilt?
If in thy favor the dread thunder speaks,
Touch with thy hand this cross, and give a sign!

[JOHANNA *remains motionless. More violent peals of thunder. The* KING, AGNES SOREL, *the* ARCHBISHOP, BURGUNDY, LA HIRE, DUCHATEL *retire.*

Scene XII.

Dunois, Johanna.

Dunois. Thou art my wife; I have believed in thee
From the first glance, and I am still unchanged.
In thee I have more faith than in these signs,
Than in the thunder's voice, which speaks above.
In noble anger thou art silent thus;
Enveloped in thy holy innocence,
Thou scornest to refute so base a charge.
Still scorn it, maiden, but confide in me;
I never doubted of thine innocence.
Speak not one word; only extend thy hand
In pledge and token that thou wilt confide
In my protection and thine own good cause.

[*He extends his hand to her; she turns from him with a convulsive motion; he remains transfixed with horror.*

Scene XIII.

Johanna, Duchatel, Dunois, *afterwards* Raimond.

Duchatel (*returning*).
Johanna d'Arc! uninjured from the town
The king permits you to depart. The gates
Stand open to you. Fear no injury, —
You are protected by the royal word.
Come follow me, Dunois! You cannot here
Longer abide with honor. What an issue!

[*He retires.* Dunois *recovers from his stupor, casts one look upon* Johanna, *and retires. She remains standing for a moment quite alone. At length* Raimond *appears; he regards her for a time with silent sorrow, and then approaching takes her hand.*

Raim. Embrace this opportunity. The streets
Are empty now. Your hand! I will conduct you.

[*On perceiving him, she gives the first sign of consciousness. She gazes on him fixedly, and looks up to heaven; then taking his hand she retires.*

ACT V.

A wild wood: charcoal-burners' huts in the distance. It is quite dark; violent thunder and lightning; firing heard at intervals.

Scene I.

Charcoal-Burner *and his* Wife.

Ch. B. This is a fearful storm, the heavens seem
As they would vent themselves in streams of fire;
So thick the darkness which usurps the day,
That one might see the stars. The angry winds
Bluster and howl like spirits loosed from hell,
The firm earth trembles, and the aged elms,
Groaning, bow down their venerable tops
Yet this terrific tumult, o'er our heads,
Which teacheth gentleness to savage beasts,
So that they seek the shelter of their caves,
Appeaseth not the bloody strife of men —
Amidst the raging of the wind and storm
At intervals is heard the cannon's roar;
So near the hostile armaments approach,
The wood alone doth part them; any hour
May see them mingle in the shock of battle.

Wife. May God protect us then! Our enemies,
Not long ago, were vanquished and dispersed.
How comes it that they trouble us again?

Ch. B. Because they now no longer fear the king.
Since that the maid turned out to be a witch
At Rheims, the devil aideth us no longer,
And things have gone against us.

Wife. Who comes here?

Scene II.

Raimond *and* Johanna *enter.*

Raim. See! here are cottages; in them at least
We may find shelter from the raging storm.
You are not able longer to endure it.
Three days already you have wandered on,
Shunning the eye of man — wild herbs and roots

Your only nourishment. Come, enter in.
These are kind-hearted cottagers.
[*The storm subsides; the air grows bright and clear.*
CHARCOAL-BURNER. You seem
To need refreshment and repose — you're welcome
To what our humble roof can offer you!
WIFE. What has a tender maid to do with arms?
Yet truly! these are rude and troublous times
When even women don the coat of mail!
The queen herself, proud Isabel, 'tis said,
Appears in armor in the hostile camp;
And a young maid, a shepherd's lowly daughter,
Has led the armies of our lord the king.
CH. B. What sayest thou? Enter the hut, and bring
A goblet of refreshment for the damsel.
[*She enters the hut.*
RAIMOND (*to* JOHANNA).
All men, you see, are not so cruel; here
E'en in the wilderness are gentle hearts.
Cheer up! the pelting storm hath spent its rage,
And, beaming peacefully, the sun declines.
CH. B. I fancy, as you travel thus in arms,
You seek the army of the king. Take heed!
Not far remote the English are encamped,
Their troops are roaming idly through the wood.
RAIM. Alas for us! how then can we escape?
CH. B. Stay here till from the town my boy returns.
He shall conduct you safe by secret paths.
You need not fear — we know each hidden way.
RAIMOND (*to* JOHANNA).
Put off your helmet and your coat-of-mail,
They will not now protect you, but betray.
[JOHANNA *shakes her head.*
CH. B. The maid seems very sad — hush! who comes here?

SCENE III.

CHARCOAL-BURNER'S WIFE *comes out of the hut with a bowl.* A BOY.

WIFE. It is our boy whom we expected back.
[*To* JOHANNA.
Drink, noble maiden! may God bless it to you!

CHARCOAL-BURNER (*to his son*).
Art come, Anet? What news?
[*The boy looks at* JOHANNA, *who is just raising the bowl to her lips; he recognizes her, steps forward, and snatches it from her.*
BOY. Oh, mother! mother!
Whom do you entertain? This is the witch—
Of Orleans!
CHARCOAL-BURNER (*and his* WIFE).
God be gracious to our souls!
[*They cross themselves and fly.*

SCENE IV.

RAIMOND, JOHANNA.

JOHANNA (*calmly and gently*)
Thou seest, I am followed by the curse,
And all fly from me. Do thou leave me, too;
Seek safety for thyself.
RAIMOND. I leave thee! now!
Alas, who then would bear thee company?
JOHAN. I am not unaccompanied. Thou hast
Heard the loud thunder rolling o'er my head—
My destiny conducts me. Do not fear;
Without my seeking I shall reach the goal.
RAIM. And whither wouldst thou go? Here stand our foes,
Who have against thee bloody vengeance sworn—
There stand our people who have banished thee.
JOHAN. Naught will befall me but what heaven ordains.
RAIM. Who will provide thee food? and who protect thee
From savage beasts, and still more savage men?
Who cherish thee in sickness and in grief?
JOHAN. I know all roots and healing herbs; my sheep
Taught me to know the poisonous from the wholesome.
I understand the movements of the stars,
And the clouds' flight; I also hear the sound
Of hidden springs. Man hath not many wants,
And nature richly ministers to life.

RAIMOND (*seizing her hand*).
Wilt thou not look within? Oh, wilt thou not
Repent thy sin, be reconciled to God,
And to the bosom of the church return?
JOHAN. Thou hold'st me guilty of this heavy sin?
RAIM. Needs must I — thou didst silently confess ——
JOHAN. Thou, who hast followed me in misery,
The only being who continued true,
Who clave to me when all the world forsook,
Thou also hold'st me for a reprobate
Who hath renounced her God ——
[RAIMOND *is silent.*
Oh, this is hard!
RAIMOND (*in astonishment*).
And thou wert really then no sorceress?
JOHAN. A sorceress!
RAIMOND. And all these miracles
Thou hast accomplished through the power of God
And of his holy saints?
JOHANNA. Through whom besides?
RAIM. And thou wert silent to that fearful charge?
Thou speakest now, and yet before the king,
When words would have availed thee, thou wert dumb!
JOHAN. I silently submitted to the doom
Which God, my lord and master, o'er me hung.
RAIM. Thou couldst not to thy father aught reply?
JOHAN. Coming from him, methought it came from God;
And fatherly the chastisement will prove.
RAIM. The heavens themselves bore witness to thy guilt!
JOHAN. The heavens spoke, and therefore I was silent.
RAIM. Thou with one word couldst clear thyself, and hast
In this unhappy error left the world?
JOHAN. It was no error — 'twas the will of heaven.
RAIM. Thou innocently sufferedst this shame,
And no complaint proceeded from thy lips!
—I am amazed at thee, I stand o'erwhelmed.
My heart is troubled in its inmost depths.
Most gladly I receive the word as truth,
For to believe thy guilt was hard indeed.

But could I ever dream a human heart
Would meet in silence such a fearful doom!

JOHAN. Should I deserve to be heaven's messenger
Unless the Master's will I blindly honored?
And I am not so wretched as thou thinkest.
I feel privation — this in humble life
Is no misfortune; I'm a fugitive,—
But in the waste I learned to know myself.
When honor's dazzling radiance round me shone,
There was a painful struggle in my breast;
I was most wretched, when to all I seemed
Most worthy to be envied. Now my mind
Is healed once more, and this fierce storm in nature,
Which threatened your destruction, was my friend;
It purified alike the world and me!
I feel an inward peace — and, come what may,
Of no more weakness am I conscious now!

RAIM. Oh, let us hasten! come, let us proclaim
Thine innocence aloud to all the world!

JOHAN. He who sent this delusion will dispel it!
The fruit of fate falls only when 'tis ripe!
A day is coming that will clear my name,
When those who now condemn and banish me,
Will see their error and will weep my doom.

RAIM. And shall I wait in silence, until chance —

JOHANNA (*gently taking his hand*).
Thy sense is shrouded by an earthly veil,
And dwelleth only on external things.
Mine eye hath gazed on the invisible!
— Without permission from our God no hair
Falls from the head of man. Seest thou the sun
Declining to the west? So certainly
As morn returneth in her radiant light,
Infallibly the day of truth shall come!

SCENE V.

QUEEN ISABEL, *with soldiers, appears in the background.*

ISABEL (*behind the scene*).
This is the way toward the English camp!

RAIM. Alas! the foe!

[*The soldiers advance, and perceiving* JOHANNA *fall back in terror.*

ISABEL. What now obstructs the march?

SOLD. May God protect us!

ISABEL. Do ye see a spirit?
How! Are ye soldiers! Ye are cowards all!

[*She presses forward, but starts back on beholding the* MAIDEN.
What do I see!

[*She collects herself quickly and approaches her.*
Submit thyself! Thou art
My prisoner!

JOHANNA. I am. [RAIMOND *flies in despair.*

ISABEL (*to the soldiers*). Lay her in chains!

[*The soldiers timidly approach the* MAIDEN; *she extends her arms and is chained.*
Is this the mighty, the terrific one,
Who chased your warriors like a flock of lambs,
Who, powerless now, cannot protect herself?
Doth she work miracles with credulous fools,
And lose her influence when she meets a man?
[*To the* MAIDEN.
Why didst thou leave the army? Where's Dunois,
Thy knight and thy protector.

JOHANNA. I am banished.

[ISABEL, *stepping back astonished.*

ISABEL. What say'st thou? Thou art banished? By the Dauphin?

JOHAN. Inquire no further! I am in thy power,
Decide my fate.

ISABEL. Banished, because thou hast
Snatched him from ruin, placed upon his brow
The crown at Rheims, and made him King of France?
Banished! Therein I recognize my son!
— Conduct her to the camp, and let the host
Behold the phantom before whom they trembled!
She a magician? Her sole magic lies
In your delusion and your cowardice!
She is a fool who sacrificed herself
To save her king, and reapeth for her pains

A king's reward. Bear her to Lionel.
The fortune of the French I send him bound;
I'll follow anon.

JOHANNA. To Lionel?
Slay me at once, ere send me unto him.

ISABEL (*to the soldiers*).
Obey your orders, soldiers! Bear her hence. [*Exit.*

SCENE VI.

JOHANNA, SOLDIERS.

JOHANNA (*to the soldiers*).
Ye English, suffer not that I escape
Alive out of your hands! Revenge yourselves!
Unsheath your weapons, plunge them in my heart,
And drag me lifeless to your general's feet!
Remember it was I who slew your heroes,
Who never showed compassion, who poured forth
Torrents of English blood, who from your sons
Snatched the sweet pleasure of returning home!
Take now a bloody vengance! Murder me!
I now am in your power; I may perchance
Not always be so weak.

CONDUCTOR OF THE SOLDIERS. Obey the queen!

JOHAN. Must I be yet more wretched than I was!
Unpitying Virgin! Heavy is thy hand!
Hast thou completely thrust me from thy favor?
No God appears, no angel shows himself;
Closed are heaven's portals, miracles have ceased.
[*She follows the* SOLDIERS.

SCENE VII.

The French Camp.

DUNOIS, *between the* ARCHBISHOP *and* DUCHATEL.

ARCH. Conquer your sullen indignation, prince!
Return with us! Come back unto your king!
In this emergency abandon not
The general cause, when we are sorely pressed,
And stand in need of your heroic arm,

DUNOIS. Why are ye sorely pressed? Why doth the foe
Again exalt himself? all was achieved; —
France was triumphant — war was at an end; —
The savior you have banished; you henceforth
May save yourselves; I'll not again behold
The camp wherein the maid abideth not.
DUCHAT. Think better of it, prince! Dismiss us not
With such an answer!
DUNOIS. Silence, Duchatel!
You're hateful to me; I'll hear naught from you;
You were the first who doubted of her truth.
ARCH. Who had not wavered on that fatal day,
And been bewildered, when so many signs
Bore evidence against her! We were stunned,
Our hearts were crushed beneath the sudden blow.
— Who in that hour of dread could weigh the proofs?
Our calmer judgment now returns to us,
We see the maid as when she walked with us,
Nor have we any fault to charge her with.
We are perplexed — we fear that we have done
A grievous wrong. The king is penitent,
The duke remorseful, comfortless La Hire,
And every heart doth shroud itself in woe.
DUNOIS. She a deluder? If celestial truth
Would clothe herself in a corporeal form,
She needs must choose the features of the maiden.
If purity of heart, faith, innocence,
Dwell anywhere on earth, upon her lips
And in her eyes' clear depths they find their home.
ARCH. May the Almighty, through a miracle,
Shed light upon this awful mystery,
Which baffles human insight. Howsoe'er
This sad perplexity may be resolved,
One of two grievous sins we have committed!
Either in fight we have availed ourselves
Of hellish arms, or banished hence a saint!
And both call down upon this wretched land
The vengeance and the punishment of heaven!

Scene VIII.

The same, a Nobleman, *afterwards* Raimond.

Noble. A shepherd youth inquires after your highness,
He urgently entreats an interview,
He says he cometh from the maiden ——
Dunois. Haste!
Conduct him hither! He doth come from her!
[*The* Nobleman *opens the door to* Raimond, Dunois *hastens to meet him.*
Where is she? Where is the maid?
Raimond. Hail! noble prince!
And blessed am I that I find with you
This holy man, the shield of the oppressed,
The father of the poor and destitute!
Dunois. Where is the maiden?
Arch. Speak, my son, inform us!
Raim. She is not, sir, a wicked sorceress!
To God and all his saints I make appeal.
An error blinds the people. You've cast forth
God's messenger, you've banished innocence!
Dunois. Where is she?
Raimond. I accompanied her flight
Towards the woods of Ardennes; there she hath
Revealed to me her spirit's inmost depths.
In torture I'll expire, and will resign
My hopes of everlasting happiness,
If she's not guiltless, sir, of every sin!
Dunois. The sun in heaven is not more pure than she!
Where is she? Speak!
Raimond. If God hath turned your hearts,
Oh hasten, I entreat you — rescue her —
She is a prisoner in the English camp.
Dunois. A prisoner say you?
Archbishop. Poor unfortunate!
Raim. There in the forest as we sought for shelter,
We were encountered by Queen Isabel,
Who seized and sent her to the English host.
Oh, from a cruel death deliver her
Who hath full many a time delivered you!
Dunois. Sound an alarm! to arms! up! beat the drums

Forth to the field! Let France appear in arms!
The crown and the palladium are at stake!
Our honor is in pledge! risk blood and life!
She must be rescued ere the day is done! [*Exit.*

Scene IX.

A watch-tower — an opening above.

Johanna *and* Lionel.

Fastolfe (*entering hastily*).
The people can no longer be restrained.
With fury they demand the maiden's death.
In vain your opposition. Let her die
And throw her head down from the battlements!
Her blood alone will satisfy the host.

Isabel (*coming in*).
With ladders they begin to scale the walls.
Appease the angry people! Will you wait
Till in blind fury they o'erthrow the tower,
And we beneath its towers are destroyed?
Protect her here you cannot. Give her up!

Lionel. Let them storm on. In fury let them rage!
Firm is this castle, and beneath its ruins
I will be buried ere I yield to them.
—Johanna, answer me! only be mine,
And I will shield thee 'gainst a world in arms.

Isabel. Are you a man?

Lionel. Thy friends have cast thee off.
To thy ungrateful country thou dost owe
Duty and faith no longer. The false cowards
Who sought thy hand, forsake thee in thy need.
They for thy honor venture not the fight,
But I, against my people and 'gainst thine,
Will be thy champion. Once thou didst confess
My life was dear to thee; in combat then
I stood before thee as thine enemy —
Thou hast not now a single friend but me.

Johan. Thou art my people's enemy and mine.
Between us there can be no fellowship.
Thee I can never love, but if thy heart
Cherish affection for me, let it bring

A blessing on my people. Lead thy troops
Far from the borders of my fatherland;
Give up the keys of all the captured towns,
Restore the booty, set the captives free,
Send hostages the compact to confirm,
And peace I offer thee in my king's name.

ISABEL. Wilt thou, a captive, dictate laws to us?

JOHAN. It must be done; 'tis useless to delay.
Never, oh never, will this land endure
The English yoke; sooner will France become
A mighty sepulchre for England's hosts.
Fallen in battle are your bravest chiefs.
Think how you may achieve a safe retreat;
Your fame is forfeited, your power is lost.

ISABEL. Can you endure her raving insolence?

SCENE X.

A CAPTAIN *enters hastily.*

CAPT. Haste, general! Prepare the host for battle.
The French with flying banners come this way,
Their shining weapons glitter in the vale.

JOHANNA (*with enthusiasm*).
My people come this way! Proud England now
Forth in the field! now boldly must you fight!

FASTOL. Deluded woman, moderate your joy!
You will not see the issue of this day.

JOHAN. My friends will win the fight and I shall die!
The gallant heroes need my arm no more.

LIONEL. These dastard enemies I scorn. They have
In twenty battles fled before our arms,
Ere this heroic maiden fought for them.
All the whole nation I despise, save one,
And this one they have banished. Come, Fastolfe,
We soon will give them such another day
As that of Poictiers and of Agincourt
Do you remain with the fortress, queen,
And guard the maiden till the fight is o'er.
I leave for your protection fifty knights.

FASTOL. How! general, shall we march against the foe
And leave this raging fury in our rear?

JOHAN. What! can a fettered woman frighten thee?

LIONEL. Promise, Johanna, not to free thyself.
JOHAN. To free myself is now my only wish.
ISABEL. Bind her with triple chains. I pledged my life
That she shall not escape.
[*She is bound with heavy chains.*
LIONEL (*to* JOHANNA). Thou will'st it so!
Thou dost compel us! still it rests with thee!
Renounce the French — the English banner bear,
And thou art free, and these rude, savage men
Who now desire thy blood shall do thy will.
FASTOLFE (*urgently*).
Away, away, my general!
JOHANNA. Spare thy words,
The French are drawing near. Defend thyself!
[*Trumpets sound,* LIONEL *hastens forth.*
FASTOL. You know your duty, queen! if fate declares
Against us, should you see our people fly.
ISABEL (*showing a dagger*).
Fear not. She shall not live to see our fall.
FASTOLFE (*to* JOHANNA).
Thou knowest what awaits thee, now implore
A blessing on the weapons of thy people. [*Exit.*

SCENE XI.

ISABEL, JOHANNA, SOLDIERS.

JOHAN. Ay! that I will! no power can hinder me.
Hark to that sound, the war-march of my people!
How its triumphant notes inspire my heart!
Ruin to England! victory to France!
Up, valiant countrymen! The maid is near;
She cannot, as of yore, before you bear
Her banner — she is bound with heavy chains;
But freely from her prison soars her soul,
Upon the pinions of your battle-song.
ISABEL (*to a* SOLDIER).
Ascend the watch-tower which commands the field,
And thence report the progress of the fight.
[SOLDIER *ascends.*
JOHAN. Courage, my people! 'Tis the final struggle —
Another victory, and the foe lies low!
ISABEL. What see'st thou?

SOLDIER. They're already in close fight.
A furious warrior on a Barbary steed,
In tiger's skin, leads forward the gens d'armes.
JOHAN. That's Count Dunois! on, gallant warrior!
Conquest goes with thee.
SOLDIER. The Burgundian duke
Attacks the bridge.
ISABEL. Would that ten hostile spears
Might his perfidious heart transfix, the traitor!
SOLD. Lord Fastolfe gallantly opposes him.
Now they dismount — they combat man to man
Our people and the troops of Burgundy.
ISABEL. Behold'st thou not the Dauphin? See'st thou not
The royal wave?
SOLDIER. A cloud of dust
Shrouds everything. I can distinguish naught.
JOHAN. Had he my eyes, or stood I there aloft,
The smallest speck would not elude my gaze!
The wild fowl I can number on the wing,
And mark the falcon in his towering flight.
SOLD. There is a fearful tumult near the trench;
The chiefs, it seems, the nobles, combat there.
ISABEL. Still doth our banner wave?
SOLDIER. It proudly floats.
JOHAN. Could I look through the loopholes of the wall,
I with my glance the battle would control.
SOLD. Alas! What do I see? Our general's
Surrounded by the foe!
ISABEL (*points the dagger at* JOHANNA). Die, wretch!
SOLDIER (*quickly*). He's free!
The gallant Fastolfe in the rear attacks
The enemy — he breaks their serried ranks.
ISABEL (*withdrawing the dagger*).
There spoke thy angel!
SOLDIER. Victory! They fly.
ISABEL. Who fly?
SOLDIER. The French and the Burgundians fly;
The field is covered o'er with fugitives.
JOHAN. My God! Thou wilt not thus abandon me!
SOLD. Yonder they lead a sorely wounded knight;
The people rush to aid him — he's a prince.

ISABEL. One of our country, or a son of France?
SOLD. They loose his helmet — it is Count Dunois.
JOHANNA (*seizes her fetters with convulsive violence*).
And I am nothing but a fettered woman!
SOLD. Look yonder! Who the azure mantle wears
Bordered with gold?
JOHANNA. That is my lord, the king.
SOLD. His horse is restive, plunges, rears and falls —
He struggles hard to extricate himself.
[JOHANNA *accompanies these words with passionate movements.*
Our troops are pressing on in full career,
They near him, reach him — they surround him now.
JOHAN. Oh, have the heavens above no angels more!
ISABEL (*laughing scornfully*).
Now is the time, deliverer — now deliver!
JOHANNA (*throws herself upon her knees, and prays with passionate violence*).
Hear me, O God, in my extremity!
In fervent supplication up to Thee,
Up to thy heaven above I send my soul.
The fragile texture of a spider's web,
As a ship's cable, thou canst render strong;
Easy it is to thine omnipotence
To change these fetters into spider's webs —
Command it, and these massy chains shall fall,
And these thick walls be rent, Thou, Lord of old,
Didst strengthen Samson, when enchained and blind
He bore the bitter scorn of his proud foes.
Trusting in thee, he seized with mighty power
The pillars of his prison, bowed himself,
And overthrew the structure.
SOLDIER. Triumph!
ISABEL. How?
SOLD. The king is taken!
JOHANNA (*springing up*). Then God be gracious to me!
[*She seizes her chains violently with both hands, and breaks them asunder. At the same moment rushing upon the nearest soldier, she seizes his sword and hurries out. All gaze after her, transfixed with astonishment.*

Scene XII.

The same, without Johanna.

Isabel (*after a long pause*).
How was it? Did I dream? Where is she gone?
How did she break these ponderous iron chains?
A world could not have made me credit it,
If I had not beheld it with these eyes.
Soldier (*from the tower*).
How? Hath she wings? Hath the wind borne her down?
Isabel. Is she below?
Soldier. She strides amidst the fight:
Her course outspeeds my sight — Now she is here —
Now there — I see her everywhere at once!
— She separates the troops — all yield to her:
The scattered French collect — they form anew!
—Alas! what do I see! Our people cast
Their weapons to the ground, our banners sink ——
Isabel. What! Will she snatch from us the victory?
Sold. She presses forward, right towards the king.
She reaches him — she bears him from the fight —
Lord Fastolfe falls — the general is taken!
Isabel. I'll hear no more. Come down!
Sold. Fly, queen! you will be taken by surprise.
Armed soldiers are advancing tow'rds the tower.
[*He comes down.*
Isabel (*drawing her sword*).
Then fight, ye cowards.

Scene XIII.

La Hire *with soldiers. At his entrance the people of the* Queen *lay down their arms.*

La Hire (*approaching her respectfully*).
Queen, submit yourself —
Your knights have yielded — to resist is vain!
—Accept my proffered services. Command
Where you would be conducted.

ISABEL. Every place
The same, where I encounter not the Dauphin.
[*She resigns her sword, and follows him with the soldiers.*

The Scene changes to the battle-field.

SCENE XIV.

Soldiers with flying banners occupy the background. Before them the KING *and the* DUKE OF BURGUNDY *appear, bearing* JOHANNA *in their arms; she is mortally wounded, and apparently lifeless. They advance slowly to the front of the stage.* AGNES SOREL *rushes in.*

SOREL (*throwing herself on the bosom of the* KING).
You're free — you live — I have you back again!
KING. Yes, I am free — I am so at this price!
[*Pointing to* JOHANNA.
SOREL. Johanna! God! she's dying!
BURGUNDY. She is gone
An angel passeth hence! See, how she lies,
Easy and tranquil, like a sleeping child!
The peace of heaven around her features plays,
The breath of life no longer heaves her breast,
But vital warmth still lingers in her hand.
KING. She's gone! She never will awaken more,
Her eye will gaze no more on earthly things.
She soars on high, a spirit glorified,
She seeth not our grief, our penitence.
SOREL. Her eyes unclose — she lives!
BURGUNDY (*in astonishment*). Can she return
Back from the grave, triumphant e'en o'er death?
She riseth up! She standeth!
JOHANNA (*standing up, and looking round*). Where am I?
BURG. With thine own people, maiden — with thy friends!
KING. Supported by thy friend, and by thy king.
JOHANNA (*after looking at him fixedly for some time*).
No! I am not a sorceress! Indeed
I am not one.

KING. Thou'rt holy, as an angel;
A cloud of error dimmed our mental sight.
JOHANNA (*gazing round her with a joyful smile*).
And am I really, then, among my friends,
And am no more rejected and despised?
They curse me not — kindly they look on me!
—Yes, all around me now seems clear again!
That is my king! — the banners these of France!
My banner I behold not — where is it?
Without my banner I dare not appear;
To me it was confided by my Lord,
And I before his throne must lay it down;
I there may show it, for I bore it truly.
KING (*averting his face*). Give her the banner!
[*It is given to her. She stands quite unsupported, the banner in her hand. The heaven is illumined by a rosy light.*
JOHAN. See you the rainbow yonder in the air?
Its golden portals heaven doth wide unfold,
Amid the angel choir she radiant stands,
The eternal Son she claspeth to her breast,
Her arms she stretcheth forth to me in love.
How is it with me? Light clouds bear me up —
My ponderous mail becomes a winged robe;
I mount — I fly — back rolls the dwindling earth —
Brief is the sorrow, endless is the joy!
[*Her banner falls and she sinks lifeless on the ground. All remain for some time in speechless sorrow. Upon a signal from the* KING, *all the banners are gently placed over her, so that she is entirely concealed by them.*

ON THE

USE OF THE CHORUS

IN TRAGEDY.

A POETICAL work must vindicate itself: if the execution be defective, little aid can be derived from commentaries.

On these grounds I might safely leave the chorus to be its own advocate, if we had ever seen it presented in an appropriate manner. But it must be remembered that a dramatic composition first assumes the character of a whole by means of representation on the stage. The poet supplies only the words, to which, in a lyrical tragedy, music and rhythmical motion are essential accessories. It follows, then, that if the chorus is deprived of accompaniments appealing so powerfully to the senses, it will appear a superfluity in the economy of the drama — a mere hinderance to the development of the plot — destructive to the illusion of the scene, and wearisome to the spectators.

To do justice to the chorus, more especially if our aims in poetry be of a grand and elevated character, we must transport ourselves from the actual to a possible stage. It is the privilege of art to furnish for itself whatever is requisite, and the accidental deficiency of auxiliaries ought not to confine the plastic imagination of the poet. He aspires to whatever is most dignified, he labors to realize the ideal in his own mind — though in the execution of his purpose he must needs accommodate himself to circumstances.

The assertion so commonly made that the public degrades art is not well founded. It is the artist that brings the public to the level of his own conceptions; and, in every age in which art has gone to decay, it has fallen through its professors. The people need feeling alone, and feeling they possess. They take their station before the curtain with an unvoiced longing, with a multifarious capacity. They bring with them an aptitude for what is highest — they derive the greatest pleasure from what is judicious and true; and if, with these powers of appreciation, they deign to be satisfied with inferior productions, still, if they have once tasted what is excellent, they will in the end insist on having it supplied to them.

It is sometimes objected that the poet may labor according to an ideal — that the critic may judge from ideas, but that mere executive art is subject to contingencies, and depends for effect on the occasion. Managers will be obstinate; actors are bent on display — the audience is inattentive and unruly. Their object is relaxation, and they are disappointed if mental exertion be required, when they expected only amusement. But if the theatre be made instrumental towards higher objects, the pleasure of the spectator will not be increased, but ennobled. It will be a diversion, but a poetical one. All art is dedicated to pleasure, and there can be no higher and worthier end than to make men happy. The true art is that which provides the highest degree of pleasure; and this consists in the abandonment of the spirit to the free play of all its faculties.

Every one expects from the imaginative arts a certain emancipation from the bounds of reality: we are willing to give a scope to fancy, and recreate ourselves with the possible. The man who expects it the least will nevertheless forget his ordinary pursuits, his everyday existence and individuality, and experience delight from uncommon incidents: — if he be of a serious turn of mind he will acknowledge on the stage that moral government of the

world which he fails to discover in real life. But he is, at the same time, perfectly aware that all is an empty show, and that in a true sense he is feeding only on dreams. When he returns from the theatre to the world of realities, he is again compressed within its narrow bounds; he is its denizen as before — for it remains what it was, and in him nothing has been changed. What, then, has he gained beyond a momentary illusive pleasure which vanished with the occasion?

It is because a passing recreation is alone desired that a mere show of truth is thought sufficient. I mean that probability or *vraisemblance* which is so highly esteemed, but which the commonest workers are able to substitute for the true.

Art has for its object not merely to afford a transient pleasure, to excite to a momentary dream of liberty; its aim is to make us absolutely free; and this it accomplishes by awakening, exercising, and perfecting in us a power to remove to an objective distance the sensible world; (which otherwise only burdens us as rugged matter, and presses us down with a brute influence;) to transform it into the free working of our spirit, and thus acquire a dominion over the material by means of ideas. For the very reason also that true art requires somewhat of the objective and real, it is not satisfied with a show of truth. It rears its ideal edifice on truth itself — on the solid and deep foundations of nature.

But how art can be at once altogether ideal, yet in the strictest sense real; how it can entirely leave the actual, and yet harmonize with nature, is a problem to the multitude; and hence the distorted views which prevail in regard to poetical and plastic works; for to ordinary judgments these two requisites seem to counteract each other.

It is commonly supposed that one may be attained by the sacrifice of the other; — the result is a failure to arrive at either. One to whom nature has given a true sensibility, but denied the plastic imaginative power, will be a faithful painter of the real; he will adapt casual appearances, but never catch the spirit of nature. He will only reproduce to us the matter of the world, which, not being our own work, the product of our creative spirit, can never have the beneficent operation of art, of which the essence is freedom. Serious indeed, but unpleasing, is the cast of thought with which such an artist and poet dismisses us; we feel ourselves painfully thrust back into the narrow sphere of reality by means of the very art which ought to have emancipated us. On the other hand, a writer endowed with a lively fancy, but destitute of warmth and individuality of feeling, will not concern himself in the least about truth; he will sport with the stuff of the world, and endeavor to surprise by whimsical combinations; and as his whole performance is nothing but foam and glitter, he will, it is true, engage the attention for a time, but build up and confirm nothing in the understanding. His playfulness is, like the gravity of the other, thoroughly unpoetical. To string together at will fantastical images is not to travel into the realm of the ideal; and the imitative reproduction of the actual cannot be called the representation of nature. Both requisites stand so little in contradiction to each other that they are rather one and the same thing; that art is only true insomuch as it altogether forsakes the actual, and becomes purely ideal. Nature herself is an idea of the mind, and is never presented to the senses. She lies under the veil of appearances, but is herself never apparent. To the art of the ideal alone is lent, or rather absolutely given, the privilege to grasp the spirit of the all and bind it in a corporeal form.

Yet, in truth, even art cannot present it to the senses, but by means of her creative power to the imaginative faculty alone; and it is thus that she becomes more true than all reality, and more real than all experience. It follows from these premises that the artist can use no single element taken from reality as he finds it — that his work must be ideal in all its parts, if it be designed to have, as it were, an intrinsic reality, and to harmonize with nature.

What is true of art and poetry, in the abstract, holds good as to their various kinds; and we may apply what has been advanced to the subject of tragedy. In this department it is still necessary to controvert the ordinary notion of the natural, with which poetry is altogether incompatible. A certain ideality has been allowed in painting, though, I fear, on grounds rather conventional than intrinsic; but in dramatic works what is desired is allusion, which, if it could be accomplished by means of the actual,

would be, at best, a paltry deception. All the externals of a theatrical representation are opposed to this notion; all is merely a symbol of the real. The day itself in a theatre is an artificial one; the metrical dialogue is itself ideal; yet the conduct of the play must forsooth be real, and the general effect sacrificed to a part. Thus the French, who have utterly misconceived the spirit of the ancients, adopted on their stage the unities of time and place in the most common and empirical sense; as though there were any place but the bare ideal one, or any other time than the mere sequence of the incidents.

By the introduction of a metrical dialogue an important progress has been made towards the poetical tragedy. A few lyrical dramas have been successful on the stage, and poetry, by its own living energy, has triumphed over prevailing prejudices. But so long as these erroneous views are entertained little has been done — for it is not enough barely to tolerate as a poetical license that which is, in truth, the essence of all poetry. The introduction of the chorus would be the last and decisive step; and if it only served this end, namely, to declare open and honorable warfare against naturalism in art, it would be for us a living wall which tragedy had drawn around herself, to guard her from contact with the world of reality, and maintain her own ideal soil, her poetical freedom.

It is well-known that the Greek tragedy had its origin in the chorus; and though, in process of time it became independent, still it may be said that poetically, and in spirit, the chorus was the source of its existence, and that without these persevering supporters and witnesses of the incident a totally different order of poetry would have grown out of the drama. The abolition of the chorus, and the debasement of this sensibly powerful organ into the characterless substitute of a confidant, is by no means such an improvement in the tragedy as the French, and their imitators, would have it supposed to be.

The old tragedy, which at first only concerned itself with gods, heroes and kings, introduced the chorus as an essential accompaniment. The poets found it in nature, and for that reason employed it. It grew out of the poetical aspect of real life. In the new tragedy it becomes an organ of art, which aids in making the poetry prominent. The modern poet no longer finds the chorus in nature; he must needs create and introduce it poetically; that is, he must resolve on such an adaption of his story as will admit of its retrocession to those primitive times and to that simple form of life.

The chorus thus renders more substantial service to the modern dramatist than to the old poet — and for this reason, that it transforms the commonplace actual world into the old poetical one; that it enables him to dispense with all that is repugnant to poetry, and conducts him back to the most simple, original, and genuine motives of action. The palaces of kings are in these days closed — courts of justice have been transferred from the gates of cities to the interior of buildings; writing has narrowed the province of speech; the people itself — the sensibly living mass — when it does not operate as brute force, has become a part of the civil polity, and thereby an abstract idea in our minds; the deities have returned within the bosoms of mankind. The poet must reopen the palaces — he must place courts of justice beneath the canopy of heaven — restore the gods, reproduce every extreme which the artificial frame of actual life has abolished — throw aside every factitious influence on the mind or condition of man which impedes the manifestation of his inward nature and primitive character, as the statuary rejects modern costume: — and of all external circumstances adopts nothing but what is palpable in the highest of forms — that of humanity.

But precisely as the painter throws around his figures draperies of ample volume, to fill up the space of his picture richly and gracefully, to arrange its several parts in harmonious masses, to give due play to color, which charms and refreshes the eye — and at once to envelop human forms in a spiritual veil, and make them visible — so the tragic poet inlays and entwines his rigidly contracted plot and the strong outlines of his characters with a tissue of lyrical magnificence, in which, as in flowing robes of purple, they move freely and nobly, with a sustained dignity and exalted repose.

In a higher organization, the material, or the elementary, need not be visible; the chemical color vanishes in the finer tints of the imaginative one. The material, however, has its peculiar effect, and may be included in an artistical composition. But it must deserve its place by animation, fulness,

and harmony, and give value to the ideal forms which it surrounds, instead of stifling them by its weight.

In respect of the pictorial art, this is obvious to ordinary apprehension, yet in poetry likewise, and in the tragical kind, which is our immediate subject, the same doctrine holds good. Whatever fascinates the senses alone is mere matter, and the rude element of a work of art: — if it takes the lead it will inevitably destroy the poetical — which lies at the exact medium between the ideal and the sensible. But man is so constituted that he is ever impatient to pass from what is fanciful to what is common; and reflection must, therefore, have its place even in tragedy. But to merit this place it must, by means of delivery, recover what it wants in actual life; for if the two elements of poetry, the ideal and the sensible, do not operate with an inward mutuality, they must at least act as allies — or poetry is out of the question. If the balance be not intrinsically perfect, the equipoise can only be maintained by an agitation of both scales.

This is what the chorus effects in tragedy. It is, in itself, not an individual but a general conception; yet it is represented by a palpable body which appeals to the senses with an imposing grandeur. It forsakes the contracted sphere of the incidents to dilate itself over the past and the future, over distant times and nations, and general humanity, to deduce the grand results of life, and pronounce the lessons of wisdom. But all this it does with the full power of fancy — with a bold lyrical freedom which ascends, as with godlike step, to the topmost height of worldly things; and it effects it in conjunction with the whole sensible influence of melody and rhythm, in tones and movements.

The chorus thus exercises a purifying influence on tragic poetry, insomuch as it keeps reflection apart from the incidents, and by this separation arms it with a poetical vigor; as the painter, by means of a rich drapery, changes the ordinary poverty of costume into a charm and an ornament.

But as the painter finds himself obliged to strengthen the tone of color of the living subject, in order to counterbalance the material influences — so the lyrical effusions of the chorus impose upon the poet the necessity of a proportionate elevation of his general diction. It is the chorus alone which entitles the poet to employ this fulness of tone, which at once charms the senses, pervades the spirit, and expands the mind. This one giant form on his canvas obliges him to mount all his figures on the cothurnus, and thus impart a tragical grandeur to his picture. If the chorus be taken away, the diction of the tragedy must generally be lowered, or what is now great and majestic will appear forced and overstrained. The old chorus introduced into the French tragedy would present it in all its poverty, and reduce it to nothing; yet, without doubt, the same accompaniment would impart to Shakspeare's tragedy its true significance.

As the chorus gives life to the language — so also it gives repose to the action; but it is that beautiful and lofty repose which is the characteristic of a true work of art. For the mind of the spectator ought to maintain its freedom through the most impassioned scenes; it should not be the mere prey of impressions, but calmly and severely detach itself from the emotions which it suffers. The commonplace objection made to the chorus, that it disturbs the illusion, and blunts the edge of the feelings, is what constitutes its highest recommendation; for it is this blind force of the affections which the true artist deprecates — this illusion is what he disdains to excite. If the strokes which tragedy inflicts on our bosoms followed without respite, the passion would overpower the action. We should mix ourselves up with the subject-matter, and no longer stand above it. It is by holding asunder the different parts, and stepping between the passions with its composing views, that the chorus restores to us our freedom, which would else be lost in the tempest. The characters of the drama need this intermission in order to collect themselves; for they are no real beings who obey the impulse of the moment, and merely represent individuals — but ideal persons and representatives of their species, who enunciate the deep things of humanity.

Thus much on my attempt to revive the old chorus on the tragic stage. It is true that choruses are not unknown to modern tragedy; but the chorus of the Greek drama, as I have employed it — the chorus, as a single ideal person, furthering and accompanying the whole plot — is of an entirely distinct character; and when, in discussion on the Greek tragedy, I hear mention made of choruses, I generally suspect the speaker's ignorance of his subject.

In my view the chorus has never been reproduced since the decline of the old tragedy.

I have divided it into two parts, and represented it in contest with itself; but this occurs where it acts as a real person, and as an unthinking multitude. As chorus and an ideal person it is always one and entire. I have also several times* dispensed with its presence on the stage. For this liberty I have the example of Æschylus, the creator of tragedy, and Sophocles, the greatest master of his art.

Another license it may be more difficult to excuse. I have blended together the Christian religion and the pagan mythology, and introduced recollections of the Moorish superstition. But the scene of the drama is Messina — where these three religions either exercised a living influence, or appealed to the senses in monumental remains. Besides, I consider it a privilege of poetry to deal with different religions as a collective whole, in which everything that bears an individual character, and expresses a peculiar mode of feeling, has its place. Religion itself, the idea of a Divine Power, lies under the veil of all religions; and it must be permitted to the poet to represent it in the form which appears the most appropriate to his subject.

THE BRIDE OF MESSINA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ISABELLA, *Princess of Messina.*
DON MANUEL } *her Sons.*
DON CÆSAR }
BEATRICE.
DIEGO, *an ancient Servant.*

MESSENGERS.
THE ELDERS OF MESSINA, *mute.*
THE CHORUS, *consisting of the Followers of the two Princes.*

SCENE I.

A spacious hall, supported on columns, with entrances on both sides; at the back of the stage a large folding-door leading to a chapel.

DONNA ISABELLA *in mourning; the* ELDERS OF MESSINA.

ISAB. Forth from my silent chamber's deep recesses,
Gray Fathers of the State, unwillingly
I come; and, shrinking from your gaze, uplift
The veil that shades my widowed brows: the light
And glory of my days is fled forever!
And best in solitude and kindred gloom
To hide these sable weeds, this grief-worn frame,
Beseems the mourner's heart. A mighty voice
Inexorable — duty's stern command,
Calls me to light again.
Not twice the moon
Has filled her orb since to the tomb ye bore
My princely spouse, your city's lord, whose arm
Against a world of envious foes around
Hurled fierce defiance! Still his spirit lives
In his heroic sons, their country's pride:
Ye marked how sweetly from their childhood's bloom
They grew in joyous promise to the years
Of manhood's strength; yet in their secret hearts,

From some mysterious root accursed, upsprung
Unmitigable, deadly hate, that spurned
All kindred ties, all youthful, fond affections,
Still ripening with their thoughtful age; not mine
The sweet accord of family bliss; though each
Awoke a mother's rapture; each alike
Smiled at my nourishing breast! for me alone
Yet lives one mutual thought, of children's love;
In these tempestuous souls discovered else
By mortal strife and thirst of fierce revenge.
While yet their father reigned, his stern control
Tamed their hot spirits, and with iron yoke
To awful justice bowed their stubborn will:
Obedient to his voice, to outward seeming
They calmed their wrathful mood, nor in array
Ere met, of hostile arms; yet unappeased
Sat brooding malice in their bosoms' depths;
They little reck of hidden springs whose power
Can quell the torrent's fury: scarce their sire
In death had closed his eyes, when, as the spark
That long in smouldering embers sullen lay,
Shoots forth a towering flame; so unconfined
Burst the wild storm of brothers' hate triumphant
O'er nature's holiest bands. Ye saw, my friends,
Your country's bleeding wounds, when princely strife
Woke discord's maddening fires, and ranged her sons
In mutual deadly conflict; all around
Was heard the clash of arms, the din of carnage,
And e'en these halls were stained with kindred gore.
Torn was the state with civil rage, this heart
With pangs that mothers feel; alas, unmindful
Of aught but public woes, and pitiless
You sought my widow's chamber — there with taunts
And fierce reproaches for your country's ills
From that polluted spring of brother's hate
Derived, invoked a parent's warning voice,
And threatening told of people's discontent
And princes' crimes! "Ill-fated land! now wasted
By thy unnatural sons, ere long the prey
Of foeman's sword! Oh, haste," you cried, "and end
This strife! bring peace again, or soon Messina

Shall bow to other lords." Your stern decree
Prevailed; this heart, with all a mother's anguish
O'erlabored, owned the weight of public cares.
I flew, and at my children's feet, distracted,
A suppliant lay; till to my prayers and tears
The voice of nature answered in their breasts!
Here in the palace of their sires, unarmed,
In peaceful guise Messina shall behold
The long inveterate foes; this is the day!
E'en now I wait the messenger that brings
The tidings of my sons' approach: be ready
To give your princes joyful welcome home
With reverence such as vassals may beseem.
Bethink ye to fulfil your subject duties,
And leave to better wisdom weightier cares.
Dire was their strife to them, and to the State
Fruitful of ills; yet, in this happy bond
Of peace united, know that they are mighty
To stand against a world in arms, nor less
Enforce their sovereign will — against yourselves.

[*The* ELDERS *retire in silence; she beckons to an old attendant, who remains.*

Diego!

DIEGO. Honored mistress!

ISAB. Old faithful servant, thou true heart, come near me;
Sharer of all a mother's woes, be thine
The sweet communion of her joys: my treasure
Shrined in thy heart, my dear and holy secret
Shall pierce the envious veil, and shine triumphant
To cheerful day; too long by harsh decrees,
Silent and overpowered, affection yet
Shall utterance find in Nature's tones of rapture!
And this unprisoned heart leap to the embrace
Of all it holds most dear, returned to glad
My desolate halls;
So bend thy aged steps
To the old cloisteresd anctuary that guards
The darling of my soul, whose innocence
To thy true love (sweet pledge of happier days)!
Trusting I gave, and asked from fortune's storm
A resting-place and shrine. Oh, in this hour

Of bliss, the dear reward of all thy care.
Give to my longing arms my child again!
[*Trumpets are heard in the distance.*
Haste! be thy footsteps winged with joy — I hear
The trumpet's blast, that tells in warlike accents
My sons are near:
[*Exit* DIEGO. *Music is heard in an opposite direction, and becomes gradually louder.*
Messina is awake!
Hark! how the stream of tongues hoarse murmuring
Rolls on the breeze, — 'tis they! my mother's heart
Feels their approach, and beats with mighty throes
Responsive to the loud, resounding march!
They come! they come! my children! oh, my children! [*Exit.*

The CHORUS *enters.*

(*It consists of two semi-choruses which enter at the same time from opposite sides, and after marching round the stage range themselves in rows, each on the side by which it entered. One semi-chorus consists of young knights, the other of older ones, each has its peculiar costume and ensigns. When the two choruses stand opposite to each other, the march ceases, and the two leaders speak.*)*

First Chorus (CAJETAN).

I greet ye, glittering halls
Of olden time!
Cradle of kings! Hail! lordly roof,
In pillared majesty sublime!

Sheathed be the sword!
In chains before the portal lies
The fiend with tresses snake-entwined,
Fell Discord! Gently treat the inviolate floor!
Peace to this royal dome!
Thus by the Furies' brood we swore,
And all the dark, avenging Deities!

* The first chorus consists of Cajetan, Berengar, Manfred, Tristan, and eight followers of Don Manuel. The second of Bohemund, Roger, Hippolyte, and nine others of the party of Don Cæsar.

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND).

I rage! I burn! and scarce refrain
To lift the glittering steel on high,
For, lo! the Gorgon-visaged train
Of the detested foeman nigh:
Shall I my swelling heart control?
To parley deign — or still in mortal strife
The tumult of my soul?
Dire sister, guardian of the spot, to thee
Awe-struck I bend the knee,
Nor dare with arms profane thy deep tranquillity!

First Chorus (CAJETAN).

Welcome the peaceful strain!
Together we adore the guardian power
Of these august abodes!
Sacred the hour
To kindred brotherly ties
And reverend, holy sympathies; —
Our hearts the genial charm shall own,
And melt awhile at friendship's soothing tone: —
But when in yonder plain
We meet — then peace away!
Come gleaming arms, and battle's deadly fray!

The whole Chorus.

But when in yonder plain
We meet — then peace away!
Come gleaming arms, and battle's deadly fray!

First Chorus (BERENGAR).

I hate thee not — nor call thee foe,
My brother! this our native earth,
The land that gave our fathers birth: —
Of chief's behest the slave decreed,
The vassal draws the sword at need,
For chieftain's rage we strike the blow,
For stranger lords our kindred blood must flow.

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND).

Hate fires their souls — we ask not why; —
At honor's call to fight and die,

Boast of the true and brave!
Unworthy of a soldier's name
Who burns not for his chieftain's fame!

The whole Chorus.

Unworthy of a soldier's name
Who burns not for his chieftain's fame!

One of the Chorus (BERENGAR).

Thus spoke within my bosom's core
The thought — as hitherward I strayed;
And pensive 'mid the waving store,
I mused, of autumn's yellow glade: —
These gifts of nature's bounteous reign, —
The teeming earth, and golden grain,
Yon elms, among whose leaves entwine
The tendrils of the clustering vine; —
Gay children of our sunny clime, —
Region of spring's eternal prime!
Each charm should woo to love and joy,
No cares the dream of bliss annoy,
And pleasure through life's summer day
Speed every laughing hour away.
We rage in blood, — oh, dire disgrace!
For this usurping, alien race;
From some far distant land they came,
Beyond the sun's departing flame.
And owned upon our friendly shore
The welcome of our sires of yore.
Alas! their sons in thraldom pine,
The vassals of this stranger line.

A second (MANFRED).

Yes! pleased, on our land, from his azure way,
The sun ever smiles with unclouded ray.
But never, fair isle, shall thy sons repose
'Mid the sweets which the faithless waves enclose.
On their bosom they wafted the corsair bold,
With his dreaded barks to our coast of old.
For thee was thy dower of beauty vain,
'Twas the treasure that lured the spoiler's train.

Oh, ne'er from these smiling vales shall rise
A sword for our vanquished liberties;
'Tis not where the laughing Ceres reigns,
And the jocund lord of the flowery plains: —
Where the iron lies hid in the mountain cave,
Is the cradle of empire — the home of the brave!

[*The folding-doors at the back of the stage are thrown open.* DONNA ISABELLA *appears between her sons,* DON MANUEL *and* DON CÆSAR.

Both Choruses (CAJETAN).

Lift high the notes of praise!
Behold! where lies the awakening sun,
She comes, and from her queenly brow
Shoots glad, inspiring rays.
Mistress, we bend to thee!

First Chorus.

Fair is the moon amid the starry choir
That twinkle o'er the sky,
Shining in silvery, mild tranquillity; —
The mother with her sons more fair!
See! blooming at her side,
She leads the royal, youthful pair;
With gentle grace, and soft, maternal pride,
Attempering sweet their manly fire.

Second Chorus (BERENGAR).

From this fair stem a beauteous tree
With ever-springing boughs shall smile,
And with immortal verdure shade our isle;
Mother of heroes, joy to thee!
Triumphant as the sun thy kingly race
Shall spread from clime to clime,
And give a deathless name to rolling time!

ISABELLA (*comes forward with her* SONS).

Look down! benignant Queen of Heaven, and still,
This proud tumultuous heart, that in my breast
Swells with a mother's tide of ecstasy,
As blazoned in these noble youths, my image
More perfect shows; — Oh, blissful hour! the first

That comprehends the fulness of my joy,
When long-constrained affection dares to pour
In unison of transport from my heart,
Unchecked, a parent's undivided love:
Oh! it was ever one — my sons were twain.
Say — shall I revel in the dreams of bliss,
And give my soul to nature's dear emotions?
Is this warm pressure of thy brother's hand
A dagger in thy breast? [*To* Don Manuel.
Or when my eyes
Feed on that brow with love's enraptured gaze,
Is it a wrong to thee? [*To* Don Cæsar.
Trembling, I pause,
Lest e'en affection's breath should wake the fires
Of slumbering hate.
[*After regarding both with inquiring looks.*
Speak! In your secret hearts
What purpose dwells? Is it the ancient feud
Unreconciled, that in your father's halls
A moment stilled; beyond the castle gates,
Where sits infuriate war, and champs the bit —
Shall rage anew in mortal, bloody conflict?

Chorus (Bohemund).

Concord or strife — the fate's decree
Is bosomed yet in dark futurity!
What comes, we little heed to know,
Prepared for aught the hour may show!

Isabella (*looking round*).

What mean these arms? this warlike, dread array,
That in the palace of your sires portends
Some fearful issue? needs a mother's heart
Outpoured, this rugged witness of her joys?
Say, in these folding arms shall treason hide
The deadly snare? Oh, these rude, pitiless men,
The ministers of your wrath! — trust not the show
Of seeming friendship; treachery in their breasts
Lurks to betray, and long-dissembled hate.
Ye are a race of other lands; your sires
Profaned their soil; and ne'er the invader's yoke
Was easy — never in the vassal's heart

Languished the hope of sweet revenge; — our sway
Not rooted in a people's love, but owns
Allegiance from their fears; with secret joy —
For conquest's ruthless sword, and thraldom's chains
From age to age, they wait the atoning hour
Of princes' downfall; — thus their bards awake
The patriot strain, and thus from sire to son
Rehearsed, the old traditionary tale
Beguiles the winter's night. False is the world,
My sons, and light are all the specious ties
By fancy twined: friendship — deceitful name!
Its gaudy flowers but deck our summer fortune,
To wither at the first rude breath of autumn!
So happy to whom heaven has given a brother;
The friend by nature signed — the true and steadfast!
Nature alone is honest — nature only —
When all we trusted strews the wintry shore —
On her eternal anchor lies at rest,
Nor heeds the tempest's rage.

DON MANUEL. My mother!

DON CÆSAR. Hear me!

ISABELLA (*taking their hands*).
Be noble, and forget the fancied wrongs
Of boyhood's age: more godlike is forgiveness
Than victory, and in your father's grave
Should sleep the ancient hate: — Oh, give your days
Renewed henceforth to peace and holy love!

[*She recedes one or two steps, as if to give them space to approach each other. Both fix their eyes on the ground without regarding one another.*

ISABELLA (*after awaiting for some time, with suppressed emotion, a demonstration on the part of her sons*).
I can no more; my prayers — my tears are vain: —
'Tis well! obey the demon in your hearts!
Fulfil your dread intent, and stain with blood
The holy altars of your household gods; —
These halls that gave you birth, the stage where murder
Shall hold his festival of mutual carnage
Beneath a mother's eye! — then, foot to foot,

Close, like the Theban pair, with maddening gripe,
And fold each other in a last embrace!
Each press with vengeful thrust the dagger home,
And "Victory!" be your shriek of death: — nor then
Shall discord rest appeased; the very flame
That lights your funeral pyre shall tower dissevered
In ruddy columns to the skies, and tell
With horrid image — "thus they lived and died!"

[*She goes away; the* BROTHERS *stand as before.*

Chorus (CAJETAN).

How have her words with soft control
Resistless calmed the tempest of my soul!
No guilt of kindred blood be mine!
Thus with uplifted hands I pray;
Think, brothers, on the awful day,
And tremble at the wrath divine!

DON CÆSAR (*without taking his eyes from the ground*).
Thou art my elder — speak — without dishonor
I yield to thee.

DON MANUEL. One gracious word, an instant,
My tongue is rival in the strife of love!

DON C. I am the guiltier — weaker ——

DON MANUEL. Say not so!
Who doubts thy noble heart, knows thee not well;
Thy words were prouder, if thy soul were mean.

DON C. It burns indignant at the thought of wrong —
But thou — methinks, in passion's fiercest mood,
'Twas aught but scorn that harbored in thy breast.

DON M. Oh! had I known thy spirit thus to peace
Inclined, what thousand griefs had never torn
A mother's heart!

DON CÆSAR. I find thee just and true:
Men spoke thee proud of soul.

DON MANUEL. The curse of greatness!
Ears ever open to the babbler's tale.

DON C. Thou art too proud to meanness — I to falsehood!

DON M. We're deceived, betrayed!

DON CÆSAR. The sport of frenzy!

DON M. And said my mother true, false is the world?

DON C. Believe her, false as air.
DON MANUEL. Give me thy hand!
DON C. And thine be ever next my heart!
[*They stand clasping each other's hands, and regard each other in silence.*
DON MANUEL. I gaze
Upon thy brow, and still behold my mother
In some dear lineament.
DON CÆSAR. Her image looks
From thine, and wondrous in my bosom wakes
Affection's springs.
DON MANUEL. And is it thou? — that smile
Benignant on thy face? — thy lips that charm
With gracious sounds of love and dear forgiveness?
DON C. Is this my brother, this the hated foe?
His mien all gentleness and truth, his voice,
Whose soft prevailing accents breathe of friendship!
[*After a pause.*
DON M. Shall aught divide us?
DON CÆSAR. We are one forever!
[*They rush into each other's arms.*
1ST CHORUS (*to the Second*).
Why stand we thus, and coldly gaze,
While Nature's holy transports burn?
No dear embrace of happier days
The pledge — that discord never shall return!
Brothers are they by kindred band;
We own the ties of home and native land.
[*Both* CHORUSES *embrace.*

A MESSENGER *enters.*

2D CHORUS *to* DON CÆSAR (BOHEMUND).
Rejoice, my prince, thy messenger returns:
And mark that beaming smile! the harbinger
Of happy tidings.
MESSENGER. Health to me, and health
To this delivered state! Oh sight of bliss,
That lights mine eyes with rapture! I behold
Their hands in sweet accord entwined; the sons
Of my departed lord, the princely pair
Dissevered late by conflict's hottest rage.

DON C. Yes, from the flames of hate, a new-born Phœnix,
Our love aspires!
MESSENGER. I bring another joy;
My staff is green with flourishing shoots.
DON CÆSAR (*taking him aside*). Oh, tell me
Thy gladsome message.
MESSENGER. All is happiness
On this auspicious day; long sought, the lost one
Is found.
DON CÆSAR. Discovered! Oh, where is she? Speak!
MESS. Within Messina's walls she lies concealed.
DON MANUEL (*turning to the* 1ST SEMI-CHORUS).
A ruddy glow mounts in my brother's cheek,
And pleasure dances in his sparkling eye;
Whate'er the spring, with sympathy of love
My inmost heart partakes his joy.
DON CÆSAR (*to the* MESSENGER). Come, lead me;
Farewell, Don Manuel; to meet again
Enfolded in a mother's arms! I fly
To cares of utmost need. [*He is about to depart.*
DON MANUEL. Make no delay;
And happiness attend thee!
DON CÆSAR (*after a pause of reflection, he returns*).
How thy looks
Awake my soul to transport! Yes, my brother,
We shall be friends indeed! This hour is bright
With glad presage of ever-springing love,
That in the enlivening beam shall flourish fair,
Sweet recompense of wasted years!
DON MANUEL. The blossom
Betokens goodly fruit.
DON CÆSAR. I tear myself
Reluctant from thy arms, but think not less —
If thus I break this festal hour — my heart
Thrills with a holy joy.
DON MANUEL (*with manifest absence of mind*).
Obey the moment!
Our lives belong to love.
DON CÆSAR. What calls me hence ——
DON M. Enough! thou leav'st thy heart.
DON CÆSAR. No envious secret

Shall part us long; soon the last darkening fold
Shall vanish from my breast.
[*Turning to the* CHORUS.
Attend! Forever
Stilled is our strife; he is my deadliest foe,
Detested as the gates of hell, who dares
To blow the fires of discord; none may hope
To win my love, that with malicious tales
Encroach upon a brother's ear, and point
With busy zeal of false, officious friendship.
The dart of some rash, angry word, escaped
From passion's heat; it wounds not from the lips,
But, swallowed by suspicion's greedy ear,
Like a rank, poisonous weed, embittered creeps,
And hangs about her with a thousand shoots,
Perplexing nature's ties.
[*He embraces his brother again, and goes away accompanied by the* 2D CHORUS.

Chorus (CAJETAN). Wondering, my prince,
I gaze, for in thy looks some mystery
Strange-seeming shows: scarce with abstracted mien
And cold thou answered'st, when with earnest heart
Thy brother poured the strain of dear affection.
As in a dream thou stand'st, and lost in thought,
As though — dissevered from its earthly frame —
Thy spirit roved afar. Not thine the breast
That deaf to nature's voice, ne'er owned the throbs
Of kindred love: — nay more — like one entranced
In bliss, thou look'st around, and smiles of rapture
Play on thy cheek.

DON MANUEL. How shall my lips declare
The transports of my swelling heart? My brother
Revels in glad surprise, and from his breast
Instinct with strange new-felt emotions, pours
The tide of joy; but mine — no hate came with me,
Forgot the very spring of mutual strife!
High o'er this earthly sphere, on rapture's wings,
My spirit floats; and in the azure sea,
Above — beneath — no track of envious night
Disturbs the deep serene! I view these halls,
And picture to my thoughts the timid joy

Of my sweet bride, as through the palace gates,
In pride of queenly state, I lead her home.
She loved alone the loving one, the stranger,
And little deems that on her beauteous brow
Messina's prince shall 'twine the nuptial wreath.
How sweet, with unexpected pomp of greatness,
To glad the darling of my soul! too long
I brook this dull delay of crowning bliss!
Her beauty's self, that asks no borrowed charm,
Shall shine refulgent, like the diamond's blaze
That wins new lustre from the circling gold!

Chorus (Cajetan).

Long have I marked thee, prince, with curious eye,
Foreboding of some mystery deep enshrined
Within thy laboring breast. This day, impatient,
Thy lips have burst the seal; and unconstrained
Confess a lover's joy; — the gladdening chase,
The Olympian coursers, and the falcon's flight
Can charm no more: — soon as the sun declines
Beneath the ruddy west, thou hiest thee quick
To some sequestered path, of mortal eye
Unseen — not one of all our faithful train
Companion of thy solitary way.
Say, why so long concealed the blissful flame?
Stranger to fear — ill-brooked thy princely heart
One thought unuttered.

Don Manuel. Ever on the wing
Is mortal joy; — with silence best we guard
The fickle good; — but now, so near the goal
Of all my cherished hopes, I dare to speak.
To-morrow's sun shall see her mine! no power
Of hell can make us twain! With timid stealth
No longer will I creep at dusky eve,
To taste the golden fruits of Cupid's tree,
And snatch a fearful, fleeting bliss: to-day
With bright to-morrow shall be one! So smooth
As runs the limpid brook, or silvery sand
That marks the flight of time, our lives shall flow
In continuity of joy!

Chorus (Cajetan). Already
Our hearts, my prince, with silent vows have blessed

Thy happy love; and now from every tongue,
For her — the royal, beauteous bride — should sound
The glad acclaim; so tell what nook unseen,
What deep umbrageous solitude, enshrines
The charmer of thy heart? With magic spells
Almost I deem she mocks our gaze, for oft
In eager chase we scour each rustic path
And forest dell; yet not a trace betrayed
The lover's haunts, ne'er were the footsteps marked
Of this mysterious fair.

Don Manuel. The spell is broke!
And all shall be revealed: now list my tale: —
'Tis five months flown, — my father yet controlled
The land, and bowed our necks with iron sway;
Little I knew but the wild joys of arms,
And mimic warfare of the chase; —
One day, —
Long had we tracked the boar with zealous toil
On yonder woody ridge: — it chanced, pursuing
A snow-white hind, far from your train I roved
Amid the forest maze; — the timid beast,
Along the windings of the narrow vale,
Through rocky cleft and thick-entangled brake,
Flew onward, scarce a moment lost, nor distant
Beyond a javelin's throw; nearer I came not,
Nor took an aim; when through a garden's gate,
Sudden she vanished: — from my horse quick springing,
I followed: — lo! the poor scared creature lay
Stretched at the feet of a young, beauteous nun,
That strove with fond caress of her fair hands
To still its throbbing heart: wondering, I gazed,
And motionless — my spear, in act to strike,
High poised — while she, with her large piteous eyes
For mercy sued — and thus we stood in silence
Regarding one another.
How long the pause
I know not — time itself forgot; — it seemed
Eternity of bliss: her glance of sweetness
Flew to my soul; and quick the subtle flame
Pervaded all my heart: —

But what I spoke,
And how this blessed creature answered, none
May ask; it floats upon my thought, a dream
Of childhood's happy dawn! Soon as my sense
Returned, I felt her bosom throb responsive
To mine, — then fell melodious on my ear
The sound, as of a convent bell, that called
To vesper song; and, like some shadowy vision
That melts in air, she flitted from my sight,
And was beheld no more.

Chorus (CAJETAN). Thy story thrills
My breast with pious awe! Prince, thou hast robbed
The sanctuary, and for the bride of heaven
Burned with unholy passion! Oh, remember
The cloister's sacred vows!

DON MANUEL. Thenceforth one path
My footsteps wooed; the fickle train was still
Of young desires — new felt my being's aim,
My soul revealed! and as the pilgrim turns
His wistful gaze, where, from the orient sky,
With gracious lustre beams Redemption's star; —
So to that brightest point of heaven, her presence,
My hopes and longings centred all. No sun
Sank in the western waves, but smiled farewell
To two united lovers: — thus in stillness
Our hearts were twined, — the all-seeing air above us
Alone the faithful witness of our joys!
Oh, golden hours! Oh, happy days! nor Heaven
Indignant viewed our bliss; — no vows enchained
Her spotless soul; naught but the link which bound it
Eternally to mine!

Chorus (CAJETAN). Those hallowed walls,
Perchance the calm retreat of tender youth,
No living grave?

DON MANUEL. In infant innocence
Consigned a holy pledge, ne'er has she left
Her cloistered home.

Chorus (CAJETAN). But what her royal line?
The noble only spring from noble stem.

DON M. A secret to herself, — she ne'er has learned
Her name or fatherland.

Chorus (Cajetan). And not a trace
Guides to her being's undiscovered springs?
Don M. An old domestic, the sole messenger
Sent by her unknown mother, oft bespeaks her
Of kingly race.
Chorus (Cajetan). And hast thou won naught else
From her gárrulous age?
Don Manuel. Too much I feared to peril
My secret bliss!
Chorus (Cajetan). What were his words? What tidings
He bore — perchance thou know'st.
Don Manuel. Oft he has cheered her
With promise of a happier time, when all
Shall be revealed.
Chorus (Cajetan). Oh, say — betokens aught
The time is near?
Don Manuel. Not distant far the day
That to the arms of kindred love once more
Shall give the long forsaken, orphaned maid —
Thus with mysterious words the aged man
Has shadowed oft what most I dread — for awe
Of change disturbs the soul supremely blest:
Nay, more; but yesterday his message spoke
The end of all my joys — this very dawn,
He told, should smile auspicious on her fate,
And light to other scenes — no precious hour
Delayed my quick resolves — by night I bore her
In secret to Messina.
Chorus (Cajetan). Rash the deed
Of sacrilegious spoil! forgive, my prince,
The bold rebuke; thus to unthinking youth
Old age may speak in friendship's warning voice.
Don M. Hard by the convent of the Carmelites,
In a sequestered garden's tranquil bound,
And safe from curious eyes, I left her, — hastening
To meet my brother: trembling there she counts
The slow-paced hours, nor deems how soon triumphant
In queenly state, high on the throne of fame,
Messina shall behold my timid bride.

For next, encompassed by your knightly train,
With pomp of greatness in the festal show,
Her lover's form shall meet her wondering gaze!
Thus will I lead her to my mother; thus —
While countless thousands on her passage wait
Amid the loud acclaim — the royal bride
Shall reach my palace gates!

Chorus (Cajetan). Command us, prince,
We live but to obey!

Don Manuel. I tore myself
Reluctant from her arms; my every thought
Shall still be hers: so come along, my friends,
To where the turbaned merchant spreads his store
Of fabrics gold enwrought with curious art;
And all the gathered wealth of eastern climes.
First choose the well-formed sandals — meet to guard
And grace her delicate feet; then for her robe —
The tissue, pure as Etna's snow that lies
Nearest the sun — light as the wreathy mist
At summer dawn — so playful let it float
About her airy limbs. A girdle next,
Purple with gold embroidered o'er, to bind
With witching grace the tunic that confines
Her bosom's swelling charms: of silk the mantle,
Gorgeous with like empurpled hues, and fixed
With clasp of gold — remember, too, the bracelets
To gird her beauteous arms; nor leave the treasure
Of ocean's pearly deeps and coral caves.
About her locks entwine a diadem
Of purest gems — the ruby's fiery glow
Commingling with the emerald's green. A veil,
From her tiara pendent to her feet,
Like a bright fleecy cloud shall circle round
Her slender form; and let a myrtle wreath
Crown the enchanting whole!

Chorus (Cajetan). We haste, my prince.
Amid the Bàzar's glittering rows, to cull
Each rich adornment.

Don Manuel. From my stables lead
A palfrey, milk-white as the steeds that draw
The chariot of the sun; purple the housings,

The bridle sparkling o'er with precious gems,
For it shall bear my queen! Yourselves be ready
With trumpet's cheerful clang, in martial train
To lead your mistress home: let two attend me,
The rest await my quick return; and each
Guard well my secret purpose.

[*He goes away accompanied by two of the* CHORUS.

Chorus (CAJETAN).

The princely strife is o'er, and say,
What sport shall wing the slow-paced hours,
And cheat the tedious day?
With hope and fear's enlivening zest
Disturb the slumber of the breast,
And wake life's dull, untroubled sea
With freshening airs of gay variety.

One of the Chorus (MANFRED).

Lovely is peace! A beauteous boy,
Couched listless by the rivulet's glassy tide,
'Mid nature's tranquil scene,
He views the lambs that skip with innocent joy,
And crop the meadow's flowering pride: —
Then with his flute's enchanting sound,
He wakes the mountain echoes round,
Or slumbers in the sunset's ruddy sheen,
Lulled by the murmuring melody.
But war for me! my spirit's treasure,
Its stern delight, and wilder pleasure:
I love the peril and the pain,
And revel in the surge of fortune's boisterous main!

A second (BERENGAR).

Is there not love, and beauty's smile
That lures with soft, resistless wile?
'Tis thrilling hope! 'tis rapturous fear
'Tis heaven upon this mortal sphere;
When at her feet we bend the knee,
And own the glance of kindred ecstasy!
For ever on life's checkered way,
'Tis love that tints the darkening hues of care
With soft benignant ray;

The mirthful daughter of the wave,
Celestial Venus ever fair,
Enchants our happy spring with fancy's gleam,
And wakes the airy forms of passion's golden dream.

First (MANFRED).

To the wild woods away!
Quick let us follow in the train
Of her, chaste huntress of the silver bow;
And from the rocks amain
Track through the forest gloom the bounding roe,
The war-god's merry bride,
The chase recalls the battle's fray,
And kindles victory's pride: —
Up with the streaks of early morn,
We scour with jocund hearts the misty vale,
Loud echoing to the cheerful horn —
Over mountain — over dale —
And every languid sense repair,
Bathed in the rushing streams of cold, reviving air.

Second (BERENGAR).

Or shall we trust the ever-moving sea,
The azure goddess, blithe and free.
Whose face, the mirror of the cloudless sky,
Lures to her bosom wooingly?
Quick let us build on the dancing waves
A floating castle gay,
And merrily, merrily, swim away!
Who ploughs with venturous keel the brine
Of the ocean crystalline —
His bride is fortune, the world his own,
For him a harvest blooms unsown: —
Here, like the wind that swift careers
The circling bound of earth and sky,
Flits ever-changeful destiny!
Of airy chance 'tis the sportive reign,
And hope ever broods on the boundless main!

A third (CAJETAN).

Nor on the watery waste alone
Of the tumultuous, heaving sea; —

On the firm earth that sleeps secure,
Based on the pillars of eternity.
Say, when shall mortal joy endure?
New bodings in my anxious breast,
Waked by this sudden friendship, rise;
Ne'er would I choose my home of rest
On the stilled lava-stream, that cold
Beneath the mountain lies:
Not thus was discord's flame controlled —
Too deep the rooted hate — too long
They brooded in their sullen hearts
O'er unforgotten, treasured wrong.
In warning visions oft dismayed,
I read the signs of coming woe;
And now from this mysterious maid
My bosom tells the dreaded ills shall flow:
Unblest, I deem, the bridal chain
Shall knit their secret loves, accursed
With holy cloisters' spoil profane.
No crooked paths to virtue lead;
Ill fruit has ever sprung from evil seed!

BERENGAR.

And thus to sad unhallowed rites
Of an ill-omened nuptial tie,
Too well ye know their father bore
A bride of mournful destiny,
Torn from his sire, whose awful curse has sped
Heaven's vengeance on the impious bed!
This fierce, unnatural rage atones
A parent's crime — decreed by fate,
Their mother's offspring, strife and hate!

[*The scene changes to a garden opening on the sea.*

BEATRICE (*steps forward from an alcove. She walks to and fro with an agitated air, looking round in every direction. Suddenly she stands still and listens.*)
No! 'tis not he: 'twas but the playful wind
Rustling the pine-tops. To his ocean bed
The sun declines, and with o'erwearied heart

I count the lagging hours: an icy chill
Creeps through my frame; the very solitude
And awful silence fright my trembling soul!
Where'er I turnn aught meets my gaze — he leaves me
Forsaken and alone!
And like a rushing stream the city's hum
Floats on the breeze, and dull the mighty sea
Rolls murmuring to the rocks: I shrink to nothing
With horrors compassed round; and like the leaf,
Borne on the autumn blast, am hurried onward
Through boundless space.
Alas! that e'er I left
My peaceful cell — no cares, no fond desires
Disturbed my breast, unruffled as the stream
That glides in sunshine through the verdant mead:
Nor poor in joys. Now — on the mighty surge
Of fortune, tempest-tossed — the world enfolds me
With giant arms! Forgot my childhood's ties
I listened to the lover's flattering tale —
Listened, and trusted! From the sacred dome
Allured — betrayed — for sure some hell-born magic
Enchained my frenzied sense — I fled with him,
The invader of religion's dread abodes!
Where art thou, my beloved? Haste — return —
With thy dear presence calm my struggling soul!
[*She listens.*
Hark! the sweet voice! No! 'twas the echoing surge
That beats upon the shore; alas! he comes not.
More faintly, o'er the distant waves, the sun
Gleams with expiring ray; a deathlike shudder
Creeps to my heart, and sadder, drearier grows
E'en desolation's self.
[*She walks to fro, and then listens again.*
Yes! from the thicket shade
A voice resounds! 'tis he! the loved one!
No fond illusion mocks my listening ear.
'Tis louder — nearer: to his arms I fly —
To his breast!
[*She rushes with outstretched arms to the extremity of the garden.* Don Cæsar *meets her.*

DON CÆSAR. BEATRICE.

BEATRICE (*starting back in horror*)
What do I see?
[*At the same moment the Chorus comes forward.*
DON CÆSAR. Angelic sweetness! fear not.
[*To the Chorus.*
Retire! your gleaming arms and rude array
Affright the timorous maid. [*To* BEATRICE.
Fear nothing! beauty
And virgin shame are sacred in my eyes.
[*The Chorus steps aside. He approaches and takes her hand.*
Where hast thou been? for sure some envious power
Has hid thee from my gaze: long have I sought thee:
E'en from the hour when 'mid the funeral rites
Of the dead prince, like some angelic vision,
Lit with celestial brightness, on my sight
Thou shonest, no other image in my breast
Waking or dreaming, lives; nor to thyself
Unknown thy potent spells; my glance of fire,
My faltering accents, and my hand that lay
Trembling in thine, bespoke my ecstasy!
Aught else with solemn majesty the rite
And holy place forbade:
The bell proclaimed
The awful sacrifice! With downcast eyes,
And kneeling I adored: soon as I rose,
And caught with eager gaze thy form again,
Sudden it vanished; yet, with mighty magic
Of love enchained, my spirit tracked thy presence;
Nor ever, with unwearied quest, I cease
At palace gates, amid the temple's throng,
In secret paths retired, or public scenes,
Where beauteous innocence perchance might rove,
To mark each passing form — in vain; but, guided
By some propitious deity this day
One of my train, with happy vigilance,
Espied thee in the neighboring church.
[BEATRICE, *who had stood trembling with averted eyes, here makes a gesture of terror.*

I see thee
Once more; and may the spirit from this frame
Be severed ere we part! Now let me snatch
This glad, auspicious moment, and defy
Or chance, or envious demon's power, to shake
Henceforth my solid bliss; here I proclaim thee,
Before this listening warlike train my bride,
With pledge of knightly honors!

[*He shows her to the Chorus*

Who thou art,
I ask not: thou art mine! But that thy soul
And birth are pure alike one glance informed
My inmost heart; and though thy lot were mean,
And poor thy lowly state, yet would I strain thee
With rapture to my arms: no choice remains,
Thou art my love — my wife! Know too, that lifted
On fortune's height, I spurn control; my will
Can raise thee to the pinnacle of greatness —
Enough my name — I am Don Cæsar! None
Is nobler in Messina!

[Beatrice *starts back in amazement. He remarks her agitation, and after a pause continues.*

What a grace
Lives in thy soft surprise and modest silence!
Yes! gentle humbleness is beauty's crown —
The beautiful forever hid, and shrinking
From its own lustre: but thy spirit needs
Repose, for aught of strange — e'en sudden joy —
Is terror-fraught. I leave thee.

Turning to the Chorus.

From this hour
She is your mistress, and my bride; so teach her
With honors due to entertain the pomp
Of queenly state. I will return with speed,
And lead her home as fits Messina's princess.

[*He goes away.*

Beatrice *and the Chorus.*

Chorus (Bohemund).

Fair maiden — hail to thee,
Thou lovely queen!

Thine is the crown, and thine the victory!
Of heroes to a distant age,
The blooming mother thou shalt shine,
Preserver of this kingly line.

(Roger).

And thrice I bid thee hail,
Thou happy fair!
Sent in auspicious hour to bless
This favored race — the god's peculiar care.
Here twine the immortal wreaths of fame
And evermore, from sire to son,
Rolls on the sceptered sway,
To heirs of old renown, a race of deathless name!

(Bohemund.)

The household gods exultingly
Thy coming wait;
The ancient, honored sires,
That on the portals frown sedate,
Shall smile for thee!
There blooming Hebe shall thy steps attend;
And golden victory, that sits
By Jove's eternal throne, with waving plumes
For conquest ever spread,
To welcome thee from heaven descend.

(Roger.)

Ne'er from this queenly, bright array
The crown of beauty fades, —
Departing to the realms of day,
Each to the next, as good and fair,
Extends the zone of feminine grace,
And veil of purity: —
Oh, happy race!
What vision glads my raptured eye!
Equal in nature's blooming pride,
I see the mother and the virgin bride.

Beatrice (*awaking from her reverie*).

Oh, luckless hour!
Alas! ill-fated maid!

Where shall I fly
From these rude warlike men?
Lost and betrayed!
A shudder o'er me came,
When of this race accursed — the brothers twain —
Their hands embrued with kindred gore,
I heard the dreaded name;
Oft told, their strife and serpent hate
With terror thrilled my bosom's core: —
And now — oh, hapless fate!
I tremble, 'mid the rage of discord thrown,
Deserted and alone!

[*She runs into the alcove.*

Chorus (Bohemund).

Son of the immortal deities,
And blest is he, the lord of power;
His every joy the world can give;
Of all that mortals prize
He culls the flower.

(Roger.)

For him from ocean's azure caves
The diver bears each pearl of purest ray;
Whate'er from nature's boundless field
Or toil or art has won,
Obsequious at his feet we lay;
His choice is ever free;
We bow to chance, and fortune's blind decree.

(Bohemund.)

But this of princes' lot I deem
The crowning treasure, joy supreme —
Of love the triumph and the prize,
The beauty, star of neighboring eyes!
She blooms for him alone,
He calls the fairest maid his own.

(Roger).

Armed for the deadly fray,
The corsair bounds upon the strand,

And drags, amid the gloom of night, away,
The shrieking captive train,
Of wild desires the hapless prey;
But ne'er his lawless hands profane
The gem — the peerless flower —
Whose charms shall deck the Sultan's bower.

(Bohemund.)

Now haste and watch, with curious eye,
These hallowed precincts round,
That no presumptuous foot come nigh
The secret, solitary ground:
Guard well the maiden fair,
Your chieftain's brightest jewel owns your care.
[*The Chorus withdraws to the background.*

[*The scene changes to a chamber in the interior of the palace.*

Donna Isabella *between* Don Manuel *and* Don Cæsar.

Isab. The long-expected, festal day is come,
My children's hearts are twined in one, as thus
I fold their hands. Oh, blissful hour, when first
A mother dares to speak in nature's voice,
And no rude presence checks the tide of love.
The clang of arms affrights mine ear no more;
And as the owls, ill-omened brood of night,
From some old, shattered homestead's ruined walls,
Their ancient reign, fly forth a dusky swarm,
Darkening the cheerful day; when absent long,
The dwellers home return with joyous shouts,
To build the pile anew; so Hate departs
With all his grisly train; pale Envy, scowling Malice,
And hollow-eyed Suspicion; from our gates,
Hoarse murmuring, to the realms of night; while Peace,
By Concord and fair Friendship led along,
Comes smiling in his place. [*She pauses.*
But not alone
This day of joy to each restores a brother;
It brings a sister! Wonderstruck you gaze!
Yet now the truth, in silence guarded long,

Bursts from my soul. Attend! I have a daughter:
A sister lives, ordained by heaven to bind ye
With ties unknown before.

DON CÆSAR. We have a sister!
What hast thou said, my mother? never told
Her being till this hour!

DON MANUEL. In childhood's years,
Oft of a sister we have heard, untimely
Snatched in her cradle by remorseless death;
So ran the tale.

ISABELLA. She lives!

DON CÆSAR. And thou wert silent!

ISAB. Hear how the seed was sown in early time,
That now shall ripen to a joyful harvest.
Ye bloomed in boyhood's tender age; e'en then
By mutual, deadly hate, the bitter spring
Of grief to this torn, anxious heart, dissevered;
Oh, may your strife return no more! A vision,
Strange and mysterious, in your father's breast
Woke dire presage: it seemed that from his couch,
With branches intertwined, two laurels grew,
And in the midst a lily all in flames,
That, catching swift the boughs and knotted stems,
Burst forth with crackling rage, and o'er the house
Spread in one mighty sea of fire: perplexed
By this terrific dream, my husband sought
An Arab, skilled to read the stars, and long
The trusted oracle, whose counsels swayed
His inmost purpose: thus the boding sage
Spoke Fate's decrees: if I a daughter bore,
Destruction to his sons and all his race
From her should spring. Soon, by heaven's will, this child
Of dreadful omen saw the light; your sire
Commanded instant in the waves to throw
The new-born innocent; a mother's love
Prevailed, and, aided by a faithful servant,
I snatched the babe from death.

DON CÆSAR. Blest be the hands
The ministers of thy care! Oh, ever rich
Of counsels was a parent's love!

ISABELLA. But more
Than Nature's mighty voice, a warning dream
Impelled to save my child: while yet unborn
She slumbered in my womb, sleeping I saw
An infant, fair as of celestial kind,
That played upon the grass; soon from the wood
A lion rushed, and from his gory jaws,
Caressing, in the infant's lap let fall
His prey, new-caught; then through the air down-swept
An eagle, and with fond caress alike
Dropped from his claws a trembling kid, and both
Cowered at the infant's feet, a gentle pair.
A monk, the saintly guide whose counsels poured
In every earthly need, the balm of heaven
Upon my troubled soul, my dream resolved.
Thus spoke the man of God: a daughter, sent
To knit the warring spirits of my sons
In bonds of tender love, should recompense
A mother's pains! Deep in my heart I treasured
His words, and, reckless of the Pagan seer,
Preserved the blessed child, ordained of heaven
To still your growing strife; sweet pledge of hope
And messenger of peace!

DON MANUEL (*embracing his brother*).
There needs no sister
To join our hearts; she shall but bind them closer.

ISAB. In a lone spot obscure, by stranger hands
Nurtured, the secret flower has grown; to me
Denied the joy to mark each infant charm
And opening grace from that sad hour of parting;
These arms ne'er clasped my child again! her sire,
To jealousy's corroding fears a prey,
And brooding dark suspicion, restless tracked
Each day my steps.

DON CÆSAR. Yet three months flown, my father
Sleeps in the tranquil grave; say, whence delayed
The joyous tidings? Why so long concealed
The maid, nor earlier taught our hearts to glow
With brother's love?

ISABELLA. The cause, your frenzied hate,

That raging unconfined, e'en on the tomb
Of your scarce buried father, lit the flames
Of mortal strife. What! could I throw my daughter
Betwixt your gleaming blades? Or 'mid the storm
Of passion would ye list a woman's counsels?
Could she, sweet pledge of peace, of all our hopes
The last and holy anchor, 'mid the rage
Of discord find a home? Ye stand as brothers,
So will I give a sister to your arms!
The reconciling angel comes; each hour
I wait my messenger's return; he leads her
From her sequestered cell, to glad once more
A mother's eyes.

DON MANUEL. Nor her alone this day
Thy arms shall fold; joy pours through all our gates;
Soon shall the desolate halls be full, the seat
Of every blooming grace. Now hear my secret:
A sister thou hast given; to thee I bring
A daughter; bless thy son! My heart has found
Its lasting shrine: ere this day's sun has set
Don Manuel to thy feet shall lead his bride,
The partner of his days.

ISABELLA. And to my breast
With transport will I clasp the chosen maid
That makes my first-born happy. Joy shall spring
Where'er she treads, and every flower that blooms
Around the path of life smile in her presence!
May bliss reward the son, that for my brows
Has twined the choicest wreath a mother wears.

CÆSAR. Yet give not all the fulness of thy blessing
To him, thy eldest born. If love be blest,
I, too, can give thee joy. I bring a daughter,
Another flower for thy most treasured garland!
The maid that in this ice-cold bosom first
Awoke the rapturous flame! Ere yonder sun
Declines, Don Cæsar's bride shall call thee mother.

DON M. Almighty Love! thou godlike power — for well
We call thee sovereign of the breast! Thy sway
Controls each warring element, and tunes
To soft accord; naught lives but owns thy greatness.

Lo! the rude soul that long defied thee melts
At thy command! [*He embraces* Don Cæsar.
Now I can trust thy heart,
And joyful strain thee to a brother's arms!
I doubt thy faith no more, for thou canst love!

Isab. Thrice blest the day, when every gloomy care
From my o'erlabored breast has flown. I see
On steadfast columns reared our kingly race,
And with contented spirit track the stream
Of measureless time. In these deserted halls,
Sad in my widow's veil, but yesterday
Childless I roamed; and soon, in youthful charms
Arrayed, three blooming daughters at my side
Shall stand! Oh, happiest mother! Chief of women,
In bliss supreme; can aught of earthly joy
O'erbalance thine?
But say, of royal stem,
What maidens grace our isle? For ne'er my sons
Would stoop to meaner brides.

Don Manuel. Seek not to raise
The veil that hides my bliss; another day
Shall tell thee all. Enough — Don Manuel's bride
Is worthy of thy son and thee.

Isabella. Thy sire
Speaks in thy words; thus to himself retired
Forever would he brood o'er counsels dark,
And cloak his secret purpose; — your delay
Be short, my son. [*Turning to* Don Cæsar.
But thou — some royal maid,
Daughter of kings, hath stirred thy soul to love;
So speak — her name ——

Don Cæsar. I have no art to veil
My thoughts with mystery's garb — my spirit free
And open as my brows; which thou wouldst know
Concerned me never. What illumes above
Heaven's flaming orb? Himself! On all the world
He shines, and with his beaming glory tells
From light he sprung: — in her pure eyes I gazed,
I looked into her heart of hearts: — the brightness
Revealed the pearl. Her race — her name — my
Ask not of me! [mother,

ISABELLA. My son, explain thy words,
For, like some voice divine, the sudden charm
Has thralled thy soul: to deeds of rash emprise
Thy nature prompted, not to fantasies
Of boyish love: — tell me, what swayed thy choice?
DON C. My choice? my mother! Is it choice when man
Obeys the might of destiny, that brings
The awful hour? I sought no beauteous bride,
No fond delusion stirred my tranquil breast,
Still as the house of death; for there, unsought,
I found the treasure of my soul. Thou know'st
That, heedless ever of the giddy race,
I looked on beauty's charms with cold disdain,
Nor deemed of womankind there lived another
Like thee — whom my idolatrous fancy decked
With heavenly graces: —
'Twas the solemn rite
Of my dead father's obsequies; we stood
Amid the countless throng, with strange attire
Hid from each other's glance; for thus ordained
Thy thoughtful care, lest with outbursting rage,
E'en by the holy place unawed, our strife
Should mar the funeral pomp.
With sable gauze
The nave was all o'erhung; the altar round
Stood twenty giant saints, uplifting each
A torch; and in the midst reposed on high
The coffin, with o'erspreading pall, that showed,
In white, redemption's sign; — thereon were laid
The staff of sovereignty, the princely crown,
The golden spurs of knighthood, and the sword,
With diamond-studded belt: —
And all was hushed
In silent prayer, when from the lofty choir,
Unseen, the pealing organ spoke, and loud
From hundred voices burst the choral strain!
Then, 'mid the tide of song, the coffin sank
With the descending floor beneath, forever
Down to the world below: — but, wide outspread
Above the yawning grave, the pall upheld
The gauds of earthly state, nor with the corpse

To darkness fell; yet on the seraph wings
Of harmony, the enfranchised spirit soared
To heaven and mercy's throne:
Thus to thy thought,
My mother, I have waked the scene anew,
And say, if aught of passion in my breast
Profaned the solemn hour; yet then the beams
Of mighty love — so willed my guiding star —
First lit my soul; but how it chanced, myself
I ask in vain.

ISABELLA. I would hear all; so end
Thy tale.

DON CÆSAR. What brought her to my side, or whence
She came, I know not: — from her presence quick
Some secret all-pervading inward charm
Awoke; 'twas not the magic of a smile,
Nor playful Cupid in her cheeks, nor more,
The form of peerless grace; — 'twas beauty's soul,
The speaking virtue, modesty inborn,
That as with magic spells, impalpable
To sense, my being thralled. We breathed together
The air of heaven: — enough! — no utterance asked
Of words, our spiritual converse; — in my heart,
Though strange, yet with familiar ties inwrought
She seemed, and instant spake the thought — 'tis she!
Or none that lives!

DON MANUEL (*interposing with eagerness*).
That is the sacred fire
From heaven! the spark of love — that on the soul
Bursts like the lightning's flash, and mounts in flame,
When kindred bosoms meet! No choice remains —
Who shall resist? What mortal break the band
That heaven has knit? Brother, my blissful fortune
Was echoed in thy tale — well thou hast raised
The veil that shadows yet my secret love.

ISAB. Thus destiny has marked the wayward course
Of my two sons: the mighty torrent sweeps
Down from the precipice; with rage he wears
His proper bed, nor heeds the channel traced
By art and prudent care. So to the powers
That darkly sway the fortunes of our house,

Trembling I yield. One pledge of hope remains;
Great as their birth — their noble souls.

ISABELLA, DON MANUEL, DON CÆSAR.

DIEGO *is seen at the door.*

ISABELLA. But see,
My faithful messenger returns. Come near me,
Honest Diego. Quick! Where is she? Tell me,
Where is my child? There is no secret here.
Oh, speak! No longer from my eyes conceal her;
Come! we are ready for the height of joy.
[*She is about to lead him towards the door.*
What means this pause? Thou lingerest — thou art dumb —
Thy looks are terror-fraught — a shudder creeps
Through all my frame — declare thy tidings! — speak!
Where is she? Where is Beatrice?
[*She is about to rush from the chamber.*

DON MANUEL (*to himself abstractedly*). Beatrice!

DIEGO (*holding back the* PRINCESS). Be still!

ISAB. Where is she? Anguish tears my breast!

DIEGO. She comes not;
I bring no daughter to thy arms.

ISABELLA. Declare
Thy message! Speak! by all the saints!
What has befallen?

DON MANUEL. Where is my sister? Tell us,
Thou harbinger of ill!

DIEGO. The maid is stolen
By corsairs! lost! Oh! that I ne'er had seen
This day of woe!

DON MANUEL. Compose thyself, my mother!

DON C. Be calm; list all this tale.

DIEGO. At thy command
I sought in haste the well-known path that leads
To the old sanctuary: — joy winged my footsteps;
The journey was my last!

DON CÆSAR. Be brief!

DON MANUEL. Proceed!

DIEGO. Soon as I trod the convent's court — impatient —
I ask — "Where is thy daughter?" Terror sate
In every eye; and straight, with horror mute,
I heard the worst.

[ISABELLA *sinks, pale and trembling, upon a chair;*
DON MANUEL *is busied about her.*

DON CÆSAR. Say'st thou by pirates stolen?
Who saw the band? — what tongue relates the spoil?

DIEGO. Not far a Moorish galley was descried,
At anchor in the bay ——

DON CÆSAR. The refuge oft
From tempests' rage; where is the bark?

DIEGO. At dawn,
With favoring breeze she stood to sea.

DON CÆSAR. But never
One prey contents the Moor; say, have they told
Of other spoil?

DIEGO. A herd that pastured near
Was dragged away.

DON CÆSAR. Yet from the convent's bound
How tear the maid unseen?

DIEGO. 'Tis thought with ladders
They scaled the wall.

DON CÆSAR. Thou knowest what jealous care
Enshrines the bride of Heaven; scarce could their steps
Invade the secret cells.

DIEGO. Bound by no vows
The maiden roved at will; oft would she seek
Alone the garden's shade. Alas! this day,
Ne'er to return!

DON CÆSAR. Saidst thou — the prize of corsairs?
Perchance, at other bidding, she forsook
The sheltering dome ——

ISABELLA (*rising suddenly*). 'Twas force! 'twas savage spoil!
Ne'er has my child, reckless of honor's ties
With vile seducer fled! My sons! Awake!
I thought to give a sister to your arms;
I ask a daughter from your swords! Arise!
Avenge this wrong! To arms! Launch every ship!

Scour all our coasts! From sea to sea pursue them!
Oh, bring my daughter! haste!

DON CÆSAR. Farewell — I fly
To vengeance! [*He goes away.*

[DON MANUEL *arouses himself from a state of abstraction, and turns, with an air of agitation, to* DIEGO.

DON MANUEL. Speak! within the convent's walls
When first unseen ——

DIEGO. This day at dawn.

DON MANUEL (*to* ISABELLA). Her name
Thou say'st is Beatrice?

ISABELLA. No questions! Fly!

DON M. Yet tell me ——

ISABELLA. Haste! Begone! Why this delay?
Follow thy brother.

DON MANUEL. I conjure thee — speak ——

ISABELLA (*dragging him away*).
Behold my tears!

DON MANUEL. Where was she hid? What region
Concealed my sister?

ISABELLA. Scarce from curious eyes
In the deep bosom of the earth more safe
My child had been!

DIEGO. Oh! now a sudden horror
Starts in my breast.

DON MANUEL. What gives thee fear?

DIEGO. 'Twas I
That guiltless caused this woe!

ISABELLA. Unhappy man!
What hast thou done?

DIEGO. To spare thy mother's heart
One anxious pang, my mistress, I concealed
What now my lips shall tell: 'twas on the day
When thy dead husband in the silent tomb
Was laid; from every side the unnumbered throng
Pressed eager to the solemn rites; thy daughter —
For e'en amid the cloistered shade was noised
The funeral pomp, urged me, with ceaseless prayers,
To lead her to the festival of Death.
In evil hour I gave consent; and, shrouded
In sable weeds of mourning, she surveyed

Her father's obsequies. With keen reproach
My bosom tells (for through the veil her charms
Resistless shone), 'twas there, perchance, the spoiler
Lurked to betray.

DON MANUEL (*to himself*). Thrice happy words! I live!
It was another!

ISABELLA (*to* DIEGO). Faithless! Ill betide
Thy treacherous age!

DIEGO. Oh, never have I strayed
From duty's path! My mistress, in her prayers
I heard the voice of Nature; thus from Heaven
Ordained, methought, the secret impulse moves
Of kindred blood, to hallow with her tears
A father's grave: the tender office owned
Thy servant's care, and thus with good intent
I wrought but ill.

DON MANUEL (*to himself*). Why stand I thus a prey
To torturing fears! No longer will I bear
The dread suspense — I will know all!

DON CÆSAR (*who returns*). Forgive me,
I follow thee.

DON MANUEL. Away! Let no man follow. [*Exit.*

DON CÆSAR (*looking after him in surprise*).
What means my brother? Speak ——

ISABELLA. In wonder lost
I gaze; some mystery lurks ——

DON CÆSAR. Thou mark'st, my mother,
My quick return; with eager zeal I flew
At thy command, nor asked one trace to guide
My footsteps to thy daughter. Whence was torn
Thy treasure? Say, what cloistered solitude
Enshrined the beauteous maid?

ISABELLA. 'Tis consecrate
To St. Cecilia; deep in forest shades,
Beyond the woody ridge that slowly climbs
Toward's Etna's towering throne, it seems a refuge
Of parted souls!

DON CÆSAR. Have courage, trust thy sons;
She shall be thine, though with unwearied quest
O'er every land and sea I track her presence
To earth's extremest bounds: one thought alone

Disturbs, — in stranger hands my timorous bride
Waits my return; to thy protecting arms
I give the pledge of all my joy! She comes;
Soon on her faithful bosom thou shalt rest
In sweet oblivion of thy cares. [*Exit.*

ISAB. When will the ancient curse be stilled that weighs
Upon our house? Some mocking demon sports
With every new-formed hope, nor envious leaves
One hour of joy. So near the haven smiled —
So smooth the treacherous main — secure I deemed
My happiness: the storm was lulled; and bright
In evening's lustre gleamed the sunny shore!
Then through the placid air the tempest sweeps,
And bears me to the roaring surge again!

[*She goes into the interior of the palace, followed by* DIEGO.

The Scene changes to the Garden.

Both Choruses, afterwards BEATRICE.

The Chorus of DON MANUEL *enters in solemn procession, adorned with garlands, and bearing the bridal ornaments above mentioned. The Chorus of* DON CÆSAR *opposes their entrance.*

First Chorus (CAJETAN).
Begone!
Second Chorus (BOHEMUND).
Not at thy bidding!

CAJETAN. Seest thou not
Thy presence irks?

BOHEMUND. Thou hast it, then, the longer!

CAJET. My place is here! What arm repels me?

BOHEMUND. Mine!

CAJET. Don Manuel sent me hither.

BOHEMUND. I obey
My Lord Don Cæsar.

CAJETAN. To the eldest born
Thy master reverence owes.

BOHEMUND. The world belongs
To him that wins!

CAJETAN. Unmannered knave, give place!

BOHEM. Our swords be measured first!
CAJETAN. I find thee ever
A serpent in my path.
BOHEMUND. Where'er I list
Thus will I meet thee!
CAJETAN. Say, why cam'st thou hither,
To spy? ——
BOHEMUND. And thou to question and command?
CAJET. To parley I disdain!
BOHEMUND. Too much I grace thee
By words!
CAJETAN. Thy hot, impetuous youth should bow
To reverend age.
BOHEMUND. Older thou art — not braver.
BEATRICE (*rushing from her place of concealment*).
Alas! What mean these warlike men?
CAJETAN (*to* BOHEMUND). I heed not
Thy threats and lofty mien.
BOHEMUND. I serve a master
Better than thine.
BEATRICE. Alas! Should he appear!
CAJET. Thou liest! Don Manuel thousandfold excels.
BOHEM. In every strife the wreath of victory decks
Don Cæsar's brows!
BEATRICE. Now he will come! Already
The hour is past!
CAJETAN. 'Tis peace, or thou shouldst know
My vengeance!
BOHEMUND. Fear, not peace, thy arm refrains.
BEAT. Oh! Were he thousand miles remote!
CAJETAN. Thy looks
But move my scorn; the compact I obey.
BOHEM. The coward's ready shield!
CAJETAN. Come on! I follow.
BOHEM. To arms!
BEATRICE (*in the greatest agitation*).
Their falchions gleam — the strife begins!
Ye heavenly powers, his steps refrain! Some snare
Throw round his feet, that in this hour of dread
He come not: all ye angels, late implored

To give him to my arms, reverse my prayers;
Far, far from hence convey the loved one!

[*She runs into the alcove. At the moment when the two Choruses are about to engage,* DON MANUEL *appears.*

DON MANUEL, *the Chorus.*

DON MANUEL. Hold!
What do I see!

First Chorus to the Second (CAJETAN, BERENGAR, MANFRED).
Come on! Come on!

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND, ROGER, HIPPOLYTE).
Down with them!

DON MANUEL (*stepping between them with drawn sword*).
Hold!

CAJETAN. 'Tis the prince!

BOHEMUND. Be still!

DON MANUEL. I stretch him dead
Upon this verdant turf that with one glance
Of scorn prolongs the strife, or threats his foe!
Why rage ye thus? What maddening fiend impels
To blow the flames of ancient hate anew,
Forever reconciled? Say, who began
The conflict? Speak ——

First Chorus (CAJETAN, BERENGAR).
My prince, we stood ——

Second Chorus (ROGER, BOHEMUND) *interrupting them.*
They came ——

DON MANUEL (*to the First Chorus*).
Speak thou!

First Chorus (CAJETAN).
With wreaths adorned, in festal train,
We bore the bridal gifts; no thought of ill
Disturbed our peaceful way; composed forever
With holy pledge of love we deemed your strife,
And trusting came; when here in rude array
Of arms encamped they stood, and loud defied us!

DON M. Slave! Is no refuge safe? Shall discord thus
Profane the bower of virgin innocence,
The home of sanctity and peace?

[*To the Second Chorus.*

Retire ——
Your warlike presence ill beseems; away!
I would be private. [*They hesitate.*
In your master's name
I give command; our souls are one, our lips
Declare each other's thoughts; begone!
[*To the First Chorus.*
Remain ——
And guard the entrance.

BOHEMUND. So! What next? Our masters
Are reconciled; that's plain; and less he wins
Of thanks than peril, that with busy zeal
In princely quarrel stirs; for when of strife
His mightiness aweary feels, of guilt
He throws the red-dyed mantle unconcerned
On his poor follower's luckless head, and stands
Arrayed in virtue's robes! So let them end
E'en as they will their brawls, I hold it best
That we obey.

[*Exit Second Chorus. The first withdraws to the back of the stage; at the same moment* BEATRICE *rushes forward, and throws herself into* DON MANUEL'S *arms.*

BEATRICE. 'Tis thou! Ah! cruel one,
Again I see thee — clasp thee — long appalled,
To thousand ills a prey, trembling I languish
For thy return: no more — in thy loved arms
I am at peace, nor think of dangers past,
Thy breast my shield from every threatening harm.
Quick! Let us fly! they see us not! — away!
Nor lose the moment.
Ha! Thy looks affright me!
Thy sullen, cold reserve! Thou tear'st thyself
Impatient from my circling arms, I know thee
No more! Is this Don Manuel? My beloved?
My husband?

DON MANUEL. Beatrice!

BEATRICE. No words! The moment
Is precious! Haste.

DON MANUEL. Yet tell me ——

BEATRICE. Quick! Away
Ere those fierce men return.
DON MANUEL. Be calm, for naught
Shall trouble thee of ill.
BEATRICE. Oh, fly! alas,
Thou know'st them not!
DON MANUEL. Protected by this arm
Canst thou fear aught?
BEATRICE. Oh, trust me; mighty men
Are here!
DON MANUEL. Beloved! mightier none than I!
BEAT. And wouldst thou brave this warlike host alone?
DON M. Alone! the men thou fear'st ——
BEATRICE. Thou know'st them not,
Nor whom they serve.
DON MANUEL. Myself! I am their lord!
BEAT. Thou art — a shudder creeps through all my frame!
DON M. Far other than I seemed; learn at last
To know me, Beatrice. Not the poor knight
Am I, the stranger and unknown, that loving
Taught thee to love; but what I am — my race —
My power ——
BEATRICE. And art thou not Don Manuel? Speak — Who art thou?
DON MANUEL. Chief of all that bear the name,
I am Don Manuel, Prince of Messina!
BEAT. Art thou Don Manuel, Don Cæsar's brother?
DON M. Don Cæsar is my brother.
BEATRICE. Is thy brother!
DON M. What means this terror? Know'st thou, then, Don Cæsar?
None other of my race?
BEATRICE. Art thou Don Manuel,
That with thy brother liv'st in bitter strife
Of long inveterate hate?
DON MANUEL. This very sun
Smiled on our glad accord! Yes, we are brothers!
Brothers in heart!
BEATRICE. And reconciled? This day?
DON M. What stirs this wild disorder? Hast thou known

Aught but our name? Say, hast thou told me all?
Is there no secret? Hast thou naught concealed?
Nothing disguised?

BEATRICE. Thy words are dark; explain,
What shall I tell thee?

DON MANUEL. Of thy mother naught
Hast thou e'er told; who is she? If in words
I paint her, bring her to thy sight ——

BEATRICE. Thou know'st her!
And thou wert silent!

DON MANUEL. If I know thy mother,
Horrors betide us both!

BEATRICE. Oh, she is gracious
As the sun's orient beam! Yes! I behold her:
Fond memory wakes; — and from my bosom's depths
Her godlike presence rises to my view!
I see around her snowy neck descend
The tresses of her raven hair, that shade
The form of sculptured loveliness; I see
The pale, high-thoughted brow; the darkening glance
Of her large lustrous orbs; I hear the tones
Of soul-fraught sweetness!

DON MANUEL. 'Tis herself!

BEATRICE. This day,
Perchance had give me to her arms, and knit
Our souls in everlasting love; — such bliss
I have renounced, yes! I have lost a mother
For thee!

DON MANUEL. Console thyself, Messina's princess
Henceforth shall call thee daughter; to her feet
I lead thee; come — she waits.

BEATRICE. What hast thou said?
Thy mother and Don Cæsar's? Never! never!

DON M. Thou shudderest! Whence this horror? Hast thou known
My mother? Speak ——

BEATRICE. O grief! O dire misfortune!
Alas! that e'er I live to see this day!

DON M. What troubles thee? Thou know'st me, thou hast found,
In the poor stranger knight, Messina's prince

BEAT. Give me the dear unknown again! With him
On earth's remotest wilds I could be blest!
DON CÆSAR (*behind the scene*).
Away! What rabble throng is here?
BEATRICE. That voice!
Oh heavens! Where shall I fly!
DON MANUEL. Know'st thou that voice?
No! thou hast never heard it; to thine ear
'Tis strange ——
BEATRICE. Oh, come — delay not ——
DON MANUEL. Wherefore I fly?
It is my brother's voice! He seeks me — how
He tracked my steps ——
BEATRICE. By all the holy saints!
Brave not his wrath! oh quit this place — avoid
him ——
Meet not thy brother here!
DON MANUEL. My soul! thy fears
Confound; thou hear'st me not; our strife is o'er.
Yes! we are reconciled.
BEATRICE. Protect me, heaven,
In this dread hour!
DON MANUEL. A sudden dire presage
Starts in my breast — I shudder at the thought:
If it be true! Oh, horror! Could she know
That voice! Wert thou — my tongue denies to utter
The words of fearful import — Beatrice!
Say, wert thou present at the funeral rites
Of my dead sire?
BEATRICE. Alas!
DON MANUEL. Thou wert!
BEATRICE. Forgive me!
DON M. Unhappy woman! —
BEATRICE. I was present!
DON MANUEL. Horror!
BEAT. Some mighty impulse urged me to the scene —
Oh, be not angry — to thyself I owned
The ardent fond desire; with darkening brow
Thou listened'st to my prayer, and I was silent,
But what misguiding inauspicious star
Allured, I know not; from my inmost soul

The wish, the dear emotion spoke; and vain
Aught else: —Diego gave consent — oh, pardon me!
I disobeyed thee.

[*She advances towards him imploringly; at the same moment* DON CÆSAR *enters, accompanied by the whole Chorus.*

BOTH BROTHERS, BOTH CHORUSES, BEATRICE.

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND) *to* DON CÆSAR.
Thou believ'st us not —
Believe thine eyes!

DON CÆSAR (*rushes forward furiously, and at the sight of his brother starts back with horror.*
Some hell-born magic cheats
My senses; in her arms! Envenomed snake!
Is this thy love? For this thy treacherous heart
Could lure with guise of friendship! Oh, from heav
Breathed my immortal hate! Down, down to hell,
Thou soul of falsehood!

[*He stabs him,* DON MANUEL *falls.*

DON MANUEL. Beatrice! — my brother!
I die! [*Dies.* BEATRICE *sinks lifeless at his side.*

First Chorus (CAJETAN).
Help! Help! To arms! Avenge with blood
The bloody deed!

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND). The fortune of the day
Is ours! The strife forever stilled: — Messina
Obeys one lord.

First Chorus (CAJETAN, BERENGAR, MANFRED).
Revenge! The murderer
Shall die! Quick, offer to your master's shade
Appeasing sacrifice!

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND, ROGER, HIPPOLYTE).
My prince! fear nothing,
Thy friends are true.

DON CÆSAR (*steps between them, looking around*).
Be still! The foe is slain
That practised on my trusting, honest heart
With snares of brother's love. Oh, direful shows
The deed of death! But righteous heaven hath judged.

First Chorus (CAJETAN).

Alas to thee, Messina! Woe forever!
Sad city! From thy blood-stained walls this deed
Of nameless horror taints the skies; ill fare
Thy mothers and thy children, youth and age,
And offspring yet unborn!

DON CÆSAR. Too late your grief —
Here give your help. [*Pointing to* BEATRICE.
Call her to life, and quick
Depart this scene of terror and of death.
I must away and seek my sister: — Hence!
Conduct her to my mother —
And tell her that her son, Don Cæsar, sends her!
[*Exit.*

[*The senseless* BEATRICE *is placed on a litter and carried away by the Second Chorus. The First Chorus remains with the body, round which the boys who bear the bridal presents range themselves in a semicircle.*

Chorus (CAJETAN).

List, how with dreaded mystery
Was signed to my prophetic soul,
Of kindred blood the dire decree: —
Hither with noiseless, giant stride
I saw the hideous fiend of terror glide!
'Tis past! I strive not to control
My shuddering awe — so swift of ill
The Fates the warning sign fulfil.
Lo! to my sense dismayed,
Sudden the deed of death has shown
Whate'er my boding fears portrayed.
The visioned thought was pain;
The present horror curdles every vein!

One of the Chorus (MANFRED).

Sound, sound the plaint of woe!
Beautiful youth!
Outstretched and pale he lies,
Untimely cropped in early bloom;
The heavy night of death has sealed his eyes; —

In this glad hour of nuptial joy,
Snatched by relentless doom,
He sleeps — while echoing to the sky,
Of sorrow bursts the loud, despairing cry!

A second (CAJETAN).

We come, we come, in festal pride,
To greet the beauteous bride;
Behold! the nuptial gifts, the rich attire:
The banquet waits, the guests are there;
They bid thee to the solemn rite
Of hymen quick repair.
Thou hear'st them not — the sportive lyre,
The frolic dance, shall ne'er invite;
Nor wake thee from thy lowly bed,
For deep the slumber of the dead!

The whole Chorus.

No more the echoing horn shall cheer
Nor bride with tones of sweetness charm his ear.
On the cold earth he lies,
In death's eternal slumber closed his eyes.

A third (CAJETAN).

What are the hopes, and fond desires
Of mortals' transitory race?
This day, with harmony of voice and soul,
Ye woke the long-extinguished fires
Of brothers' love — yon flaming orb
Lit with his earliest beams your dear embrace
At eve, upon the gory sand
Thou liest — a reeking corpse!
Stretched by a brother's murderous hand.
Vain projects, treacherous hopes,
Child of the fleeting hour are thine;
Fond man! thou rear'st on dust each bold design,

Chorus (BERENGAR).

To thy mother I will bear
The burden of unutterable woe!
Quick shall yon cypress, blooming fair,
Bend to the axe's murderous blow

Then twine the mournful bier!
For ne'er with verdant life the tree shall smile
That grew on death's devoted soil;
Ne'er in the breeze the branches play,
Nor shade the wanderer in the noontide ray;
'Twas marked to bear the fruits of doom,
Cursed to the service of the tomb.

First (CAJETAN).

Woe to the murderer! Woe!
That sped exulting in his pride,
Behold! the parched earth drinks the crimson tide.
Down, down it flows, unceasingly,
To the dim caverned halls below,
Where throned in kindred gloom the sister train,
Of Themis progeny severe,
Brood in their songless, silent reign!
Stern minister of wrath's decree,
They catch in swarthy cups thy streaming gore,
And pledge with horrid rites for vengeance evermore.

Second (BERENGAR).

Though swift of deed the traces fade
From earth, before the enlivening ray;
As o'er the brow the transient shade
Of thought, the hues of fancy flit away:—
Yet in the mystic womb unseen,
Of the dark ruling hours that sway
Our mortal lot, whate'er has been,
With new creative germ defies decay.
The blooming field is time
For nature's ever-teeming shoot,
And all is seed, and all is fruit.

The Chorus goes away, bearing the corpse of DON MANUEL *on a bier.*

SCENE — *The hall of pillars. It is night. The stage is lighted from above by a single large lamp.* DONNA ISABELLA *and* DIEGO *advance to the front.*

ISAB. As yet no joyful tidings, not a trace
Found of the lost one!

DIEGO. Nothing have we heard,
My mistress; yet o'er every track, unwearied,
Thy sons pursue. Ere long the rescued maid
Shall smile at dangers past.
ISABELLA. Alas! Diego,
My heart is sad; 'twas I that caused this woe!
DIEGO. Vex not thy anxious bosom; naught escaped
Thy thoughtful care.
ISABELLA. Oh! had I earlier shown
The hidden treasure!
DIEGO. Prudent were thy counsels,
Wisely thou left'st her in retirement's shade;
So, trust in heaven.
ISABELLA. Alas! no joy is perfect —
Without this chance of ill my bliss were pure.
DIEGO. Thy happiness is but delayed; enjoy
The concord of thy sons.
ISABELLA. The sight was rapture
Supreme, when, locked in one another's arms,
They glowed with brothers' love.
DIEGO. And in the heart
It burns; for ne'er their princely souls have stooped
To mean disguise.
ISABELLA. Now, too, their bosoms wake
To gentler thoughts, and own their softening sway
Of love. No more their hot, impetuous youth
Revels in liberty untamed, and spurns
Restraint of law, attempered passion's self,
With modest, chaste reserve.
To thee, Diego,
I will unfold my secret heart; this hour
Of feeling's opening bloom, expected long,
Wakes boding fears: thou know'st to sudden rage
Love stirs tumultuous breasts; and if this flame
With jealousy should rouse the slumbering fires
Of ancient hate — I shudder at the thought!
If these discordant souls perchance have thrilled
In fatal unison! Enough; the clouds
That black with thundering menace o'er me hung
Are past; some angel sped them tranquil by,
And my enfranchised spirit breathes again.

DIEGO. Rejoice, my mistress; for thy gentle sense
And soft, prevailing art more weal have wrought
Than all thy husband's power. Be praise to thee
And thy auspicious star!

ISABELLA. Yes, fortune smiled;
Nor light the task, so long with apt disguise
To veil the cherished secret of my heart,
And cheat my ever-jealous lord: more hard
To stifle mighty nature's pleading voice,
That, like a prisoned fire, forever strove
To rend its confines.

DIEGO. All shall yet be well;
Fortune, propitious to our hopes, gave pledge
Of bliss that time will show.

ISABELLA. I praise not yet
My natal star, while darkening o'er my fate
This mystery hangs: too well the dire mischance
Tells of the fiend whose never-slumbering rage
Pursues our house. Now list what I have done,
And praise or blame me as thou wilt; from thee
My bosom guards no secret: ill I brook
This dull repose, while swift o'er land and sea
My sons unwearied, track their sister's flight,
Yes, I have sought; heaven counsels oft, when vain
All mortal aid.

DIEGO. What I may know, my mistress,
Declare.

ISABELLA. On Etna's solitary height
A reverend hermit dwells, — benamed of old
The mountain seer, — who to the realms of light
More near abiding than the toilsome race
Of mortals here below, with purer air
Has cleansed each earthly, grosser sense away;
And from the lofty peak of gathered years,
As from his mountain home, with downward glance
Surveys the crooked paths of worldly strife.
To him are known the fortunes of our house;
Oft has the holy sage besought response
From heaven, and many a curse with earnest prayer
Averted: thither at my bidding flew,
On wings of youthful haste, a messenger,

To ask some tidings of my child: each hour
I wait his homeward footsteps.

DIEGO. If mine eyes
Deceive me not, he comes; and well his speed
Has earned thy praise.

MESSENGER, ISABELLA, DIEGO.

ISABELLA (*to* MESSENGER).
Now speak, and nothing hide
Of weal or woe; be truth upon thy lips!
What tidings bear'st thou from the mountain seer?

MESS. His answer: "Quick! retrace thy steps; the lost one
Is found."

ISABELLA. Auspicious tongue! Celestial sounds
Of peace and joy! thus ever to my vows.
Thrice honored sage, thy kindly message spoke!
But say, which heaven-directed brother traced
My daughter?

MESSENGER. 'Twas thy eldest born that found
The deep-secluded maid.

ISABELLA. Is it Don Manuel
That gives her to my arms? Oh, he was ever
The child of blessing! Tell me, hast thou borne
My offering to the aged man? the tapers
To burn before his saint? for gifts, the prize
Of wordly hearts, the man of God disdains.

MESS. He took the torches from my hands in silence
And stepping to the altar — where the lamp
Burned to his saint — illumed them at his fire,
And instant set in flames the hermit cell,
Where he has honored God these ninety years!

ISAB. What hast thou said? What horrors fright my soul?

MESS. And three times shrieking "Woe!" with downward course,
He fled; but silent with uplifted arm
Beckoned me not to follow, nor regard him
So hither I have hastened, terror-sped.

ISAB. Oh, I am tossed amid the surge again

Of doubt and anxious fears; thy tale appals
With ominous sounds of ill. My daughter found —
Thou sayest; and by my eldest born, Don Manuel?
The tidings ne'er shall bless, that heralded
This deed of woe!

MESSENGER. My mistress! look around
Behold the hermit's message to thine eyes
Fulfilled. Some charm deludes my sense, or hither
Thy daughter comes, girt by the warlike train
Of thy two sons!

[BEATRICE *carried in by the Second Chorus on a litter, and placed in the front of the stage. She is still without perception, and motionless.*

ISABELLA, DIEGO, MESSENGER, BEATRICE.

Chorus (BOHEMUND, ROGER, HIPPOLYTE, *and the other nine followers of* DON CÆSAR.)

Chorus (BOHEMUND). Here at thy feet we lay
The maid, obedient to our lord's command:
'Twas thus he spoke — "Conduct her to my mother;
And tell her that her son, Don Cæsar, sends her!

ISABELLA (*is advancing towards her with outstretched arms, and starts back in horror*).
Heavens! she is motionless and pale!

Chorus (BOHEMUND). She lives,
She will awake, but give her time to rouse
From the dread shock that holds each sense enthralled

ISAB. My daughter! Child of all my cares and pains!
And is it thus I see thee once again?
Thus thou returnest to thy father's halls!
Oh, let my breath relume thy vital spark;
Yes! I will strain thee to a mother's arms
And hold thee fast — till from the frost of death
Released thy life-warm current throbs again.
[*To the Chorus.*
Where hast thou found her? Speak! What dire mischance
Has caused this sight of woe?

Chorus (BOHEMUND). My lips are dumb!
Ask not of me: thy son will tell thee all —
Don Cæsar — for 'tis he that sends her.

ISABELLA 'Tell me
Would'st thou not say Don Manuel?
Chorus (BOHEMUND). 'Tis Don Cæsar
That sends her to thee.
ISABELLA (*to the* MESSENGER). How declared the Seer?
Speak! Was it not Don Manuel?
MESSENGER. 'Twas he!
Thy elder born.
ISABELLA. Be blessings on his head
Which e'er it be; to him I owe a daughter,
Alas! that in this blissful hour, so long
Expected, long implored, some envious fiend
Should mar my joy! Oh, I must stem the tide
Of nature's transport! In her childhood's home
I see my daughter; me she knows not — heeds not —
Nor answers to a mother's voice of love!
Ope, ye dear eyelids — hands be warm — and hea
Thou lifeless bosom with responsive throbs
To mine! 'Tis she! Diego, look! 'tis Beatrice!
The long-concealed — the lost — the rescued one!
Before the world I claim her for my own!
Chorus (BOHEMUND).
New signs of terror to my boding soul
Are pictured; — in amazement lost I stand!
What light shall pierce this gloom of mystery?
ISABELLA (*to the Chorus, who exhibit marks of confusion and embarrassment*).
Oh, ye hard hearts! Ye rude unpitying men!
A mother's transport from your breast of steel
Rebounds, as from the rocks the heaving surge!
I look around your train, nor mark one glance
Of soft regard. Where are my sons? Oh, tell me
Why come they not, and from their beaming eyes
Speak comfort to my soul? For here environed
I stand amid the desert's raging brood,
Or monsters of the deep!
DIEGO. She opes her eyes!
She moves! She lives!
ISABELLA. She lives! On me be thrown
Her earliest glance!

DIEGO. See! They are closed again —
She shudders!
ISABELLA (*to the Chorus*).
Quick! Retire — your aspect frights her.
[*Chorus steps back.*
BOHEM. Well pleased I shun her sight.
DIEGO. With outstretched eyes,
And wonderstruck, she seems to measure thee.
BEAT. Not strange those lineaments — where am I?
ISABELLA. Slowly
Her sense returns.
DIEGO. Behold! upon her knees
She sinks.
BEATRICE. Oh, angel visage of my mother!
ISAB. Child of my heart!
BEATRICE. See! kneeling at thy feet
The guilty one!
ISABELLA. I hold thee in my arms!
Enough — forgotten all!
DIEGO. Look in my face,
Canst thou remember me?
BEATRICE. The reverend brows
Of honest old Diego!
ISABELLA. Faithful guardian
Of thy young years.
BEATRICE. And am I once again
With kindred?
ISABELLA. Naught but death shall part us more!
BEAT. Will thou ne'er send me to the stranger?
ISABELLA. Never!
Fate is appeased.
BEATRICE. And am I next thy heart?
And was it all a dream — a hideous dream?
My mother! at my feet he fell! I know not
What brought me hither — yet 'tis well. Oh, bliss!
That I am safe in thy protecting arms;
They would have ta'en me to the princess, mother —
Sooner to death!
ISABELLA. My daughter, calm thy fears;
Messina's princess ——
BEATRICE. Name her not again!

At that ill-omened sound the chill of death
Creeps through my trembling frame.

ISABELLA. My child! but hear me ——

BEAT. She has two sons by mortal hate dissevered,
Don Manuel and Don Cæsar ——

ISABELLA. 'Tis myself!
Behold thy mother!

BEATRICE. Have I heard thee? Speak!

ISAB. I am thy mother, and Messina's princess!

BEAT. Art thou Don Manuel's and Don Cæsar's mother?

ISAB. And thine! They are thy brethren whom thou namest.

BEAT. Oh, gleam of horrid light!

ISABELLA. What troubles thee?
Say, whence this strange emotion?

BEATRICE. Yes! 'twas they!
Now I remember all; no dream deceived me,
They met — 'tis fearful truth! Unhappy men!
Where have ye hid him?

[*She rushes towards the Chorus; they turn away from her. A funeral march is heard in the distance.*

CHORUS. Horror! Horror!

ISABELLA. Hid!
Speak — who is hid? and what is true? Ye stand
In silent dull amaze — as though ye fathomed
Her words of mystery! In your faltering tones —
Your brows — I read of horrors yet unknown,
That would refrain my tongue! What is it? Tell me!
I will know all! Why fix ye on the door
That awe-struck gaze? What mournful music sounds?

[*The march is heard nearer.*

Chorus (BOHEMUND).
It comes! it comes! and all shall be declared
With terrible voice. My mistress! steel thy heart,
Be firm, and bear with courage what awaits thee —
For more than women's soul thy destined griefs
Demand.

ISABELLA. What comes? and what awaits me? Hark!

With fearful tones the death-wail smites mine ear —
It echoes through the house! Where are my sons?
[*The first Semi-chorus brings in the body of* Don Manuel *on a bier, which is placed at the side of the stage. A black pall is spread over it.*

Isabella, Beatrice, Diego.

Both Choruses.

First Chorus (Cajetan).

With sorrow in his train,
From street to street the King of Terror glides;
With stealthy foot, and slow,
He creeps where'er the fleeting race
Of man abides!
In turn at every gate
Is heard the dreaded knock of fate,
The message of unutterable woe!

Berengar.

When, in the sere
And autumn leaves decayed,
The mournful forest tells how quickly fade
The glories of the year!
When in the silent tomb oppressed,
Frail man, with weight of days,
Sinks to his tranquil rest;
Contented nature but obeys
Her everlasting law, —
The general doom awakes no shuddering awe!
But, mortals, oh! prepare
For mightier ills; with ruthless hand
Fell murder cuts the holy band —
The kindred tie: insatiate death,
With unrelenting rage,
Bears to his bark the flower of blooming age!

Cajetan.

When clouds athwart the lowering sky
Are driven — when bursts with hollow moan
The thunder's peal — our trembling bosoms own

The might of awful destiny!
Yet oft the lightning's glare
Darts sudden through the cloudless air: —
Then in thy short delusive day
Of bliss, oh! dread the treacherous snare;
Nor prize the fleeting goods in vain,
The flowers that bloom but to decay!
Nor wealth, nor joy, nor aught but pain,
Was e'er to mortal's lot secure: —
Our first best lesson — to endure!

ISAB. What shall I hear? What horrors lurk beneath
This funeral pall?

[*She steps towards the bier, but suddenly pauses, and stands irresolute.*

Some strange, mysterious dread
Enthrals my sense. I would approach, and sudden
The ice-cold grasp of terror holds me back!

[*To* BEATRICE, *who has thrown herself between her and the bier.*

Whate'er it be, I will unveil ——

[*On raising the pall she discovers the body of* DON MANUEL.

Eternal Powers! it is my son!

[*She stands in mute horror.* BEATRICE *sinks to the ground with a shriek of anguish near the bier.*

CHORUS. Unhappy mother! 'tis thy son. Thy lips
Have uttered what my faltering tongue denied.

ISAB. My soul! My Manuel! Oh, eternal grief!
And is it thus I see thee? Thus thy life
Has bought thy sister from the spoiler's rage?
Where was thy brother? Could no arm be found
To shield thee? Oh, be cursed the hand that dug
These gory wounds! A curse on her that bore
The murderer of my son! Ten thousand curses
On all their race!

CHORUS. Woe! Woe!

ISABELLA. And is it thus
Ye keep your word, ye gods? Is this your truth?
Alas for him that trusts with honest heart
Your soothing wiles! Why have I hoped and trembled?

And this the issue of my prayers! Attend,
Ye terror-stricken witnesses, that feed
Your gaze upon my anguish; learn to know
How warning visions cheat, and boding seers
But mock our credulous hopes; let none believe
The voice of heaven!
When in my teeming womb
This daughter lay, her father, in a dream,
Saw from his nuptial couch two laurels grow,
And in the midst a lily all in flames,
That, catching swift the boughs and knotted stems,
Burst forth with crackling rage, and o'er the house
Spread in one mighty sea of fire. Perplexed
By this terrific dream my husband sought
The counsels of the mystic art, and thus
Pronounced the sage: "If I a daughter bore,
The murderess of his sons, the destined spring
Of ruin to our house, the baleful child
Should see the light."

Chorus (CAJETAN *and* BOHEMUND).
What hast thou said, my mistress?
Woe! Woe!

ISABELLA. For this her ruthless father spoke
The dire behest of death. I rescued her,
The innocent, the doomed one; from my arms
The babe was torn; to stay the curse of heaven,
And save my sons, the mother gave her child;
And now by robber hands her brother falls;
My child is guiltless; Oh, she slew him not!

CHORUS. Woe! Woe!

ISAB. No trust the fabling readers of the stars
Have e'er deserved. Hear how another spoke
With comfort to my soul, and him I deemed
Inspired to voice the secrets of the skies!
"My daughter should unite in love the hearts
Of my dissevered sons;" and thus their tales
Of curse and blessing on her head proclaim
Each other's falsehood. No, she ne'er has brought
A curse, the innocent; nor time was given
The blessed promise to fulfil; their tongues
Were false alike; their boasted art is vain;

With trick of words they cheat our credulous ears,
Or are themselves deceived! Naught ye may know
Of dark futurity, the sable streams
Of hell the fountain of your hidden lore,
Or yon bright spring of everlasting light!

First Chorus (CAJETAN).

Woe! Woe! thy tongue refrain!
Oh, pause, nor thus with impious rage
The might of heaven profane;
The holy oracles are wise ——
Expect with awe thy coming destinies!

ISAB. My tongue shall speak as prompts my swelling heart;
My griefs shall cry to heaven. Why do we lift
Our suppliant hands, and at the sacred shrines
Kneel to adore? Good, easy dupes! What win we
From faith and pious awe? to touch with prayers
The tenants of yon azure realms on high,
Were hard as with an arrow's point to pierce
The silvery moon. Hid is the womb of time,
Impregnable to mortal glance, and deaf
The adamantine walls of heaven rebound
The voice of anguish: — Oh, 'tis one, whate'er
The flight of birds — the aspect of the stars!
The book of nature is a maze — a dream
The sage's art — and every sign a falsehood!

Second Chorus (BOHEMUND).

Woe! Woe! Ill-fated woman, stay
Thy maddening blasphemies;
Thou but disown'st, with purblind eyes,
The flaming orb of day!
Confess the gods, — they dwell on high —
They circle thee with awful majesty!

All the Knights.

Confess the gods — they dwell on high —
They circle thee with awful majesty!

BEATRICE.

Why hast thou saved thy daughter, and defied
The curse of heaven, that marked me in thy womb
The child of woe? Short-sighted mother! — vain
Thy little arts to cheat the doom declared
By the all-wise interpreters, that knit
The far and near; and, with prophetic ken,
See the late harvest spring in times unborn.
Oh, thou hast brought destruction on thy race,
Withholding from the avenging gods their prey;
Threefold, with new embittered rage, they ask
The direful penalty; no thanks thy boon
Of life deserves — the fatal gift was sorrow!

Second Chorus (BERENGAR) *looking towards the door with signs of agitation.*

Hark to the sound of dread!
The rattling, brazen din I hear!
Of hell-born snakes the hissing tones are near!
Yes — 'tis the furies' tread!

CAJETAN.

In crumbling ruin wide,
Fall, fall, thou roof, and sink, thou trembling floor
That bear'st the dread, unearthly stride!
Ye sable damps arise!
Mount from the abyss in smoky spray,
And pall the brightness of the day!
Vanish, ye guardian powers!
They come! The avenging deities!

DON CÆSAR, ISABELLA, BEATRICE. *The Chorus.*

[*On the entrance of* DON CÆSAR *the Chorus station themselves before him imploringly. He remains standing alone in the centre of the stage.*

BEAT. Alas! 'tis he —
ISABELLA (*stepping to meet him*).
My Cæsar! Oh, my son!
And is it thus I meet the? Look! Behold!
The crime of hand accursed!
[*She leads him to the corpse.*

First Chorus (CAJETAN, BERENGAR).

Break forth once more
Ye wounds! Flow, flow, in swarthy flood,
Thou streaming gore!

ISAB. Shuddering with earnest gaze, and motionless,
Thou stand'st: — yes! there my hopes repose, and all
That earth has of thy brother; in the bud
Nipped is your concord's tender flower, nor ever
With beauteous fruit shall glad a mother's eyes,

DON C. Be comforted; thy sons, with honest heart,
To peace aspired, but heaven's decree was blood!

ISAB. I know thou lovedst him well; I saw between ye,
With joy, the bands old Nature sweetly twined;
Thou wouldst have borne him in thy heart of hearts
With rich atonement of long wasted years!
But see — fell murder thwarts thy dear design,
And naught remains but vengeance!

DON CÆSAR. Come, my mother,
This is no place for thee. Oh, haste and leave
This sight of woe. [*He endeavors to drag her away.*

ISABELLA (*throwing herself into his arms*).
Thou livest! I have a son!

BEAT. Alas! my mother!

DON CÆSAR. On this faithful bosom
Weep out thy pains; nor lost thy son, — his love
Shall dwell immortal in thy Cæsar's breast.

First Chorus (CAJETAN, BERENGAR, MANFRED).

Break forth, ye wounds!
Dumb witness! the truth proclaim;
Flow fast, thou gory stream!

ISABELLA (*clasping the hands of* DON CÆSAR *and* BEATRICE).
My children!

DON CÆSAR. Oh, 'tis ecstasy! my mother,
To see her in thy arms! henceforth in love
A daughter — sister ——

ISABELLA (*interrupting him*).
Thou hast kept thy word.
My son; to thee I owe the rescued one;
Yes, thou hast sent her ——

DON CÆSAR (*in astonishment*).
Whom, my mother, sayst thou,
That I have sent?
ISABELLA. She stands before thine eyes —
Thy sister.
DON CÆSAR. She! My sister?
ISABELLA. Ay, what other?
DON C. My sister!
ISABELLA, Thou hast sent her to me!
DON CÆSAR. Horror!
His sister, too!
CHORUS. Woe! woe!
BEATRICE. Alas! my mother!
ISAB. Speak! I am all amaze!
DON CÆSAR. Be cursed the day
When I was born!
ISABELLA. Eternal powers!
DON CÆSAR. Accursed
The womb that bore me; cursed the secret arts,
The spring of all this woe; instant to crush thee,
Though the dread thunder swept — ne'er should this arm
Refrain the bolts of death: I slew my brother!
Hear it and tremble! in her arms I found him;
She was my love, my chosen bride; and he —
My brother—in her arms! Thou hast heard all!
If it be true — oh, if she be my sister —
And his! then I have done a deed that mocks
The power of sacrifice and prayers to ope
The gates of mercy to my soul!

Chorus (BOHEMUND).

The tidings on thy heart dismayed
Have burst, and naught remains; behold!
'Tis come, nor long delayed,
Whate'er the warning seers foretold:
They spoke the message from on high,
Their lips proclaimed resistless destiny!
The mortal shall the curse fulfil
Who seeks to turn predestined ill.

ISAB. The gods have done their worst; if they be true
Or false, 'tis one — for nothing they can add
To this — the measure of their rage is full.
Why should I tremble that have naught to fear?
My darling son lies murdered, and the living
I call my son no more. Oh! I have borne
And nourished at my breast a basilisk
That stung my best-beloved child. My daughter, haste,
And leave this house of horrors — I devote it
To the avenging fiends! In an evil hour
'Twas crime that brought me hither, and of crime
The victim I depart. Unwillingly
I came — in sorrow I have lived — despairing
I quit these halls; on me, the innocent,
Descends this weight of woe! Enough — 'tis shown
That Heaven is just, and oracles are true!

[*Exit, followed by* DIEGO.

BEATRICE, DON CÆSAR, *the Chorus.*

DON CÆSAR (*detaining* BEATRICE).
My sister, wouldst thou leave me? On this head
A mother's curse may fall — a brother's blood
Cry with accusing voice to heaven — all nature
Invoke eternal vengeance on my soul —
But thou — oh! curse me not — I cannot bear it!

[BEATRICE *points with averted eyes to the body.*

I have not slain thy lover! 'twas thy brother,
And mine that fell beneath my sword; and near
As the departed one, the living owns
The ties of blood: remember, too, 'tis I
That most a sister's pity need — for pure
His spirit winged its flight, and I am guilty!

[BEATRICE *bursts into an agony of tears.*

Weep! I will blend my tears with thine — nay, more,
I will avenge thy brother; but the lover —
Weep not for him — thy passionate, yearning tears
My inmost heart. Oh! from the boundless depths
Of our affliction, let me gather this,
The last and only comfort — but to know

That we are dear alike. One lot fulfilled
Has made our rights and wretchedness the same;
Entangled in one snare we fall together,
Three hapless victims of unpitying fate,
And share the mournful privilege of tears.
But when I think that for the lover more
Than for the brother bursts thy sorrow's tide,
Then rage and envy mingle with my pain,
And hope's last balm forsakes my withering soul!
Nor joyful, as beseems, can I requite
This injured shade: — yet after him content
To mercy's throne my contrite spirit shall fly,
Sped by this hand — if dying I may know
That in one urn our ashes shall repose,
With pious office of a sister's care.

[*He throws his arms around her with passionate tenderness.*

I loved thee, as I ne'er had loved before,
When thou wert strange; and that I bear the curse
Of brother's blood, 'tis but because I loved thee
With measureless transport: love was all my guilt,
But now thou art my sister, and I claim
Soft pity's tribute.

[*He regards her with inquiring glances, and an air of painful suspense — then turns away with vehemence.*

No! in this dread presence
I cannot bear these tears — my courage flies
And doubt distracts my soul. Go, weep in secret —
Leave me in error's maze — but never, never,
Behold me more: I will not look again
On thee, nor on thy mother. Oh! how passion
Laid bare her secret heart! She never loved me!
She mourned her best-loved son — that was her cry
Of grief — and naught was mine but show of fondness!
And thou art false as she! make no disguise —
Recoil with horror from my sight — this form
Shall never shock thee more — begone forever!

[*Exit.*

[*She stands irresolute in a tumult of conflicting passions — then tears herself from the spot.*

Chorus (CAJETAN).

Happy the man — his lot I prize —
That far from pomps and turmoil vain,
Childlike on nature's bosom lies
Amid the stillness of the plain.
My heart is sad in the princely hall,
When from the towering pride of state,
I see with headlong ruin fall,
How swift! the good and great!
And he — from fortune's storm at rest —
Smiles, in the quiet haven laid
Who, timely warned, has owned how blest
The refuge of the cloistered shade;
To honor's race has bade farewell,
Its idle joys and empty shows;
Insatiate wishes learned to quell,
And lulled in wisdom's calm repose: —
No more shall passion's maddening brood
Impel the busy scenes to try,
Nor on his peaceful cell intrude
The form of sad humanity!
'Mid crowds and strife each mortal ill
Abides — the grisly train of woe
Shuns like the pest the breezy hill,
To haunt the smoky marts below.

BERENGAR, BOHEMUND, *and* MANFRED.

On the mountains is freedom! the breath of decay
Never sullies the fresh flowing air;
Oh, Nature is perfect wherever we stray;
'Tis man that deforms it with care.

The whole Chorus repeats.

On the mountains is freedom, etc., etc.

DON CÆSAR, *the Chorus.*

DON CÆSAR (*more collected*).
I use the princely rights — 'tis the last time —
To give this body to the ground, and pay
Fit honors to the dead. So mark, my friends,

My bosom's firm resolve, and quick fulfil
Your lord's behest. Fresh in your memory lives
The mournful pomp, when to the tomb ye bore
So late my royal sire; scarce in these halls
Are stilled the echoes of the funeral wail;—
Another corpse succeeds, and in the grave
Weighs down its fellow-dust — almost our torch
With borrowed lustre from the last, may pierce
The monumental gloom; and on the stair,
Blends in one throng confused two mourning trains
Then in the sacred royal dome that guards
The ashes of my sire, prepare with speed
The funeral rites; unseen of mortal eye,
And noiseless be your task — let all be graced,
As then, with circumstances of kingly state.

BOHEM. My prince, it shall be quickly done; for still
Upreared, the gorgeous catafalque recalls
The dread solemnity; no hand disturbed
The edifice of death.

DON CÆSAR. The yawning grave
Amid the haunts of life? No goodly sign
Was this: the rites fulfilled, why lingered yet
The trappings of the funeral show?

BOHEMUND. Your strife
With fresh embittered hate o'er all Messina
Woke discord's maddening flames, and from the deed
Our cares withdrew — so resolute remained,
And closed the sanctuary.

DON CÆSAR. Make no delay;
This very night fulfil your task, for well
Beseems the midnight gloom! To-morrow's sun
Shall find this palace cleansed of every stain,
And light a happier race.

[*Exit the Second Chorus, with the body of* DON MANUEL.

CAJETAN. Shall I invite
The brotherhood of monks, with rights ordained
By holy church of old, to celebrate
The office of departed souls, and hymn
The buried one to everlasting rest?

DON C. Their strains above my tomb shall sound forever
Amid the torches' blaze — no solemn rites
Beseem the day when gory murder scares
Heaven's pardoning grace.

CAJETAN. Oh, let not wild despair
Tempt thee to impious, rash resolve. My prince
No mortal arm shall e'er avenge this deed;
And penance calms, with soft, atoning power,
The wrath on high.

DON CÆSAR. If for eternal justice
Earth has no minister, myself shall wield
The avenging sword; though heaven, with gracious ear,
Inclines to sinners' prayers, with blood alone
Atoned is murder's guilt.

CAJETAN. To stem the tide
Of dire misfortune, that with maddening rage
Bursts o'er your house, were nobler than to pile
Accumulated woe.

DON CÆSAR. The curse of old
Shall die with me! Death self-imposed alone
Can break the chain of fate.

CAJETAN. Thou owest thyself
A sovereign to this orphaned land, by thee
Robbed of its other lord!

DON CÆSAR. The avenging gods
Demand their prey — some other deity
May guard the living!

CAJETAN. Wide as e'er the sun
In glory beams, the realm of hope extends;
But — oh remember! nothing may we gain
From Death!

DON CÆSAR Remember thou thy vassal's duty;
Remember and be silent! Leave to me
To follow, as I list, the spirit of power
That leads me to the goal. No happy one
May look into my breast: but if thy prince
Owns not a subject's homage, dread at least
The murderer! — the accursed! — and to the head
Of the unhappy — sacred to the gods —

Give honors due. The pangs that rend my soul —
What I have suffered — what I feel — have left
No place for earthly thoughts!

DONNA ISABELLA, DON CÆSAR, *The Chorus.*

ISABELLA (*enters with hesitating steps, and looks irresolutely towards* DON CÆSAR; *at last she approaches, and addresses him with collected tones*).

I thought mine eyes should ne'er behold thee more;
Thus I had vowed despairing! Oh, my son!
How quickly all a mothers's strong resolves
Melt into air! 'Twas but the cry of rage
That stifled nature's pleading voice; but now
What tidings of mysterious import call me
From the desolate chambers of my sorrow?
Shall I believe it? Is it true? one day
Robs me of both my sons?

Chorus.

Behold! with willing steps and free,
Thy son prepares to tread
The paths of dark eternity —
The silent mansions of the dead.
My prayers are vain; but thou, with power confessed,
Of nature's holiest passion, storm his breast!

ISAB. I call the curses back — that in the frenzy
Of blind despair on thy beloved head
I poured. A mother may not curse the child
That from her nourishing breast drew life, and gave
Sweet recompense for all her travail past;
Heaven would not hear the impious vows; they fell
With quick rebound, and heavy with my tears
Down from the flaming vault!
Live! live! my son!
For I may rather bear to look on thee —
The murderer of one child — than weep for both!

DON C. Heedless and vain, my mother, are thy prayers
For me and for thyself; I have no place
Among the living: if thine eyes may brook
The murderer's sight abhorred — I could not bear
The mute reproach of thy eternal sorrow.

ISAB. Silent or loud, my son, reproach shall never
Disturb thy breast — ne'er in these halls shall sound
The voice of wailing, gently on my tears
My griefs shall flow away: the sport alike
Of pitiless fate together we will mourn,
And veil the deed of blood.

DON CÆSAR (*with a faltering voice, and taking her hand*).
Thus it shall be,
My mother — thus with silent, gentle woe
Thy grief shall fade: but when one common tomb
The murderer and his victim closes round —
When o'er our dust one monumental stone
Is rolled — the curse shall cease — thy love no more
Unequal bless thy sons: the precious tears
Thine eyes of beauty weep shall sanctify
Alike our memories. Yes! In death are quenched
The fires of rage; and hatred owns subdued,
The mighty reconciler. Pity bends
An angel form above the funeral urn,
With weeping, dear embrace. Then to the tomb
Stay not my passage: — Oh, forbid me not,
Thus with atoning sacrifice to quell
The curse of heaven.

ISABELLA. All Christendom is rich
In shrines of mercy, where the troubled heart
May find repose. Oh! many a heavy burden
Have sinners in Loretto's mansion laid;
And Heaven's peculiar blessing breathes around
The grave that has redeemed the world! The prayers
Of the devout are precious — fraught with store
Of grace, they win forgiveness from the skies; —
And on the soil by gory murder stained
Shall rise the purifying fane.

DON CÆSAR. We pluck
The arrow from the wound — but the torn heart
Shall ne'er be healed. Let him who can, drag on
A weary life of penance and of pain,
To cleanse the spot of everlasting guilt; —
I would not live the victim of despair;
No! I must meet with beaming eye the smile
Of happy ones, and breathe erect the air

Of liberty and joy. While yet alike
We shared thy love, then o'er my days of youth
Pale envy cast his withering shade; and now,
Think'st thou my heart could brook the dearer ties
That bind thee in thy sorrow to the dead?
Death, in his undecaying palace throned,
To the pure diamond of perfect virtue
Sublimes the mortal, and with chastening fire
Each gathered stain of frail humanity
Purges and burns away: high as the stars
Tower o'er this earthly sphere, he soars above me;
And as by ancient hate dissevered long,
Brethren and equal denizens we lived,
So now my restless soul with envy pines,
That he has won from me the glorious prize
Of immortality, and like a god
In memory marches on to times unborn!

ISAB. My sons! Why have I called you to Messina
To find for each a grave? I brought ye hither
To calm your strife to peace. Lo! Fate has turned
My hopes to blank despair.

DON CÆSAR. Whate'er was spoke,
My mother, is fulfilled! Blame not the end
By Heaven ordained. We trode our father's halls
With hopes of peace; and reconciled forever,
Together we shall sleep in death.

ISABELLA. My son,
Live for thy mother! In the stranger's land,
Say, wouldst thou leave me friendless and alone,
To cruel scorn a prey — no filial arm
To shield my helpless age?

DON CÆSAR. When all the world
With heartless taunts pursues thee, to our grave
For refuge fly, my mother, and invoke
Thy sons' divinity — we shall be gods!
And we will hear thy prayers: — and as the twins
Of heaven, a beaming star of comfort shine
To the tossed shipman — we will hover near thee
With present help, and soothe thy troubled soul!

ISAB. Live — for thy mother, live, my son —
Must I lose all?
[*She throws her arms about him with passionate emotion. He gently disengages himself, and turning his face away extends to her his hand.*
DON CÆSAR. Farewell!
ISABELLA. I can no more;
Too well my tortured bosom owns how weak
A mother's prayers: a mightier voice shall sound
Resistless on thy heart.
[*She goes towards the entrance of the scene.*
My daughter, come.
A brother calls him to the realms of night;
Perchance with golden hues of earthly joy
The sister, the beloved, may gently lure
The wanderer to life again.
[BEATRICE *appears at the entrance of the scene.*

DONNA ISABELLA, DON CÆSAR, *and the Chorus.*

DON CÆSAR (*on seeing her, covers his face with his hands*).
My mother!
What hast thou done?
ISABELLA (*leading* BEATRICE *forwards*).
A mother's prayers are vain!
Kneel at his feet — conjure him — melt his heart!
Oh, bid him live!
DON CÆSAR. Deceitful mother, thus
Thou triest thy son! And wouldst thou stir my soul
Again to passion's strife, and make the sun
Beloved once more, now when I tread the paths
Of everlasting night? See where he stands —
Angel of life! — and wondrous beautiful,
Shakes from his plenteous horn the fragrant store
Of golden fruits and flowers, that breathe around
Divinest airs of joy; — my heart awakes
In the warm sunbeam — hope returns, and life
Thrills in my breast anew.
ISABELLA (*to* BEATRICE). Thou wilt prevail!
Or none! Implore him that he live, nor rob
The staff and comfort of our days.

BEATRICE. The loved one
A sacrifice demands. Oh, let me die
To soothe a brother's shade! Yes, I will be
The victim! Ere I saw the light forewarned
To death, I live a wrong to heaven! The curse
Pursues me still:—'twas I that slew thy son—
I waked the slumbering furies of their strife—
Be mine the atoning blood!

CAJETAN. Ill-fated mother!
Impatient all thy children haste to doom,
And leave thee on the desolate waste alone
Of joyous life.

BEATRICE. Oh, spare thy precious days
For nature's band. Thy mother needs a son;
My brother, live for her! Light were the pang
To lose a daughter—but a moment shown,
Then snatched away!

DON CÆSAR (*with deep emotion*). 'Tis one to live or die,
Blest with a sister's love!

BEATRICE. Say—dost thou envy
Thy brother's ashes?

DON CÆSAR. In thy grief he lives
A hallowed life!—my doom is death forever!

BEAT. My brother!

DON CÆSAR. Sister! are thy tears for me?

BEAT. Live for our mother!

DON CÆSAR (*dropping her hand, and stepping back*).
For our mother?

BEATRICE (*hiding her head in his breast*). Live
For her and for thy sister!

Chorus (BOHEMUND). She has won!
Resistless are her prayers. Despairing mother,
Awake to hope again—his choice is made!
Thy son shall live!

[*At this moment an anthem is heard. The folding-doors are thrown open, and in the church is seen the catafalque erected, and the coffin surrounded with candlesticks.*

DON CÆSAR (*turning to the coffin*). I will not rob thee, brother!
The sacrifice is thine:—Hark! from the tomb,

Mightier than mother's tears, or sister's love,
Thy voice resistless cries: — my arms enfold
A treasure, potent with celestial joys,
To deck this earthly sphere, and make a lot
Worthy the gods! but shall I live in bliss,
While in the tomb thy sainted innocence
Sleeps unavenged? Thou, Ruler of our days,
All just — all wise — let not the world behold
Thy partial care! I saw her tears! — enough —
They flowed for me! I am content: my brother!
I come!

[*He stabs himself with a dagger, and falls dead at his sister's feet. She throws herself into her mother's arms.*

Chorus, CAJETAN (*after a deep silence*).

In dread amaze I stand, nor know
If I should mourn his fate. One truth revealed
Speaks in my breast; — no good supreme is life;
But all of earthly ills the chief is — Guilt!

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